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ABSTRACT

In this book, the former coordinator of the Technical Assistance Project of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) provides an insider's account of the corruption, political management, and organizational mismanagement of the AALAE in 1991-1996. Chapter 1 introduces six myths regarding nongovernmental organizations (NGOs): NGOs have the capacity to reach the poor and vulnerable; NGOs are better placed than governments to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable; NGO work is characterized by innovation and flexibility; NGOs have greater potential than government bureaucracies in empowering people at the grassroots to achieve self-reliant development; African NGOs are people's organizations; and NGOs complement governments' development efforts. These are among the topics discussed in chapters 2-12, which systematically expose each myth, are as follows: ownership of the AALAE; organizational dysfunction; roots, causes, and essence of the AALAE's current crisis; action by donors and partners; the AALAE audit; issues uncovered; and lessons learned. Fifteen tables/figures are included. Appended are the following: questionnaire used to survey of AALAE members on the AALAE's reorganization; survey findings; chronological account of the AALAE's crisis; case study of program mismanagement; and list of executive council members. The book contains 187 references. (MN)

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The Prince *of* AALAE

Corruption & Mismanagement in an African NGO

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EKUNDAYO J D THOMPSON

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The Prince
of
AALAE

Corruption & Mismanagement in an African NGO

by

EKUNDAYO J D THOMPSON

ADULT EUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

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"Like many before me, I had fallen victim to mere rhetoric. Individuals, families and organisations in Africa and elsewhere have been messed up by the art of conmanship (pokopoko) that prevailed in AALAE. What the author brings to light in this book is the glaring background against which many people who dealt with AALAE have had unforgettable experiences."

Alaoy, Madagascar

"Another great achievement by a dedicated African. It is a devastating indictment of an NGO which has been turned into a personal business. It has lost the goal of furthering the development agenda of promoting literacy and alleviation of poverty and instead has stifled development through arrogance, ineptitude and gross mismanagement. A must reading for all those involved in development work."

Dr. Abimbola Davies-Cole, Sierra Leone

"The debacle is so distressing that I am even reluctant to think that such a monstrous tragedy is possible. At the time of exit from the Association, I could not have imagined that such an inferno could ever possibly engulf it. I hope that what we slaved to build into a truly indigenous and credible African institution does not go to the gutter."

Edward Ulzen, Mamprobi, Ghana

"I understand some of the questions raised, especially those relating to ownership and accountability, and of course, professionalism. But it is not only NGOs which suffer that. How about the civil societies in Africa. Politicians and government officers get away 'free' as if the civil society were dead! The same applies to many social organisations including the church. So the struggle ought to have real teeth."

DENIVA, Uganda

DEDICATION

The Prince of AALAE is dedicated to the Participants of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg, Germany in July 1997 and to all those who strive for good governance in Africa. It is hoped that we will all strive for professional ethics and accountability in adult education.

'NGOs may have to face the same spot-light as the governments faced in the last few decades'.

Obeck-Owiti

If a blind man tells you that, he is going to throw a stone at you, then he must be stepping on one.

African Proverb

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AALAE	African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CLARION	Centre for Law and Research International
FAVDO	Forum for African Voluntary Development Organisations
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
IARA	Islamic African Relief Agency
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
ICCO	Inter-Church Coordinating Committee for Development
IIZ/DVV	Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association
MWENGO	(*Mwelekeo wa NGO*) Reflection and Development Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OD	Organisational Development
SAC	Secretariat Advisory Committee
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all those who provided information on the administrative and financial irregularities at the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) secretariat.

For a long time rumours had been doing their rounds in Nairobi and in other African cities, where the membership of AALAE is widely dispersed, with regard to financial irregularities. But in the absence of hard evidence it was foolhardy to put the issue on the agenda knowing fully well how defensive the AALAE secretariat bigots could be. Over 1994 and 1995 however, hard evidence emerged which emboldened a few of us to raise the issue, and to request an independent investigative audit of the administrative and financial affairs of AALAE. Our request was resisted, despite the mountain of evidence that was made available. Nine months later the donors and partners of AALAE commissioned an audit.

We in the AALAE secretariat were collectively responsible for all that had happened and were seen to be guilty by association. But those who were familiar with the nature of the police state that passed for a secretariat would listen to our plea of "not guilty".

Without your support the publication of this book would not have been possible. Let us hope that it will contribute to the building of an authentic NGO/civil society movement in Africa, where conmen will find it difficult to roam in the guise of dispensers of democracy and social justice.

Thank you all. We honour and respect your requests for confidentiality.

We live in a world dominated by smooth talkers who proclaim goodness but are corrupt to the core

Dan Dick

FOREWORD

On my first encounter with AALAE's mainstream leadership, and on reading the secretary general's position papers and other writings, I was convinced that AALAE was the perfect forum for any serious Pan-Africanist and friend of Africa. I saw a grouping of professionals who had contempt for mediocrity and a passion for development work especially literacy and adult education. On holding several consultative meetings with the secretary general, this view was further reaffirmed. More excitement followed when I was invited to coordinate one of AALAE's projects and when my name was added to a list of AALAE's "think tank," that hung conspicuously in the secretary general's office.

But the image projected by the AALAE leadership was far from the reality. While preaching efficiency, simple books of accounts were not being kept and consultants and creditors were being made to wait for months. While the leadership globe-trotted popularizing AALAE and mobilizing resources, traditional donor-partners and other associates were complaining about delays in the submission of project proposals for funding and reports upon which future relations would be based. Project events planned over long periods were being cancelled last minute without due regard to the thousands of people who were being affected. When partners were pleading with AALAE for financial reports, the "new world order" and "changing global situation" were being blamed for the organisation's failure to access funding for its administration and programmes. When its publications were castigating governments, the private sector and partners from the North for mismanagement of public funds, corruption and lack of transparency, AALAE's own programme officers and project coordinators were struggling against odds for access to financial information concerning their own projects! When ideas about raising resources and conserving "the little" they had were being floated daily, endless "consultative" meetings amongst a few individuals were being held in luxury hotels and teleconferences continued unabated using the secretariat's facilities for private business.

Readers of this book will probably ask themselves this question: how could a few individuals mess up a regional organisation like AALAE with such impunity while many "mighty" men and women did absolutely nothing to stop the horrrendous act?

Since the eighties, external funding flows for development work globally became increasingly focused on NGOs. The overall effect has been a big swell in the Kenyan NGO sector, making it an attractive sector to work in. With its potential to grow, lucrative salaries and opportunities and other goodies that come with the charitable status, this sector has attracted civil servants, people from the private sector, and sometimes cons and thieves dressed as princes. A taste of these negative effect is what the author graphically presents in this account of strange happenings at AALAE.

This book serves well to remind us that most of the institutions we have put in place to safeguard our interests are infact actively colluding with those who are busy looting what belongs to the people. The case of NGOs is of particular interest because of the immense trust that has been bestowed upon them to lead the process of reshaping our countries and our continent, facilitated mainly by donor funding. Isn't it a shame that what people thought would best represent their interest has turned out to be just as corrupt, if not worse than the governments they point fingers at? Even the donors must think; what disappointment? The biggest shame that this book must bring to those who care for moral and professional uprightness in NGOs is that AALAE' s case is a representation of what is happening behind closed doors in many other organisations.

However, all is not lost. Organised civil society is still the best placed to represent the interest of the voiceless majority. The fact that there is a remnant in the NGO sector who are ready to stand firm for justice, integrity and transparency whatever the cost, is the strongest testimony to the sector's potential.

A Hausa saying warns that, "ninety-nine lies may help you, but the hundredth will give you away." The day of reckoning always comes, however long it takes. In this book the author has blown a whistle on those who are responsible for plundering development resources. He has done it on behalf of those who got badly bruised after swallowing the bait of the first "seven years of correct information." As you read this book, you will not miss the challenge: that since it is the situations of people in need that give others the legitimacy to set up structures and mechanisms to appeal for funds, we are obligated to use our whistles on those others in this country and elsewhere in Africa before it is too late. Read on!

Simebba, Joseph Mukuma
Nairobi.

PROLOGUE

The title of this book evokes images of 'the Prince', characterised in one of the two most important works of Niccolo Machiavelli. The other is *The Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius.*

The Prince is a collection of rules and counsels addressed to the holder of political power; these constitute 'Machiavellianism' which is a system of technical rules for acquiring and maintaining political power through cunning, chicanery and dishonesty. When to use "the man" (laws) and "the beast" (force) is important for the survival of the Prince. But since the use of "the man" is generally ineffectual the use of "the beast" is the Prince's preferred option.

The prudent prince does not keep his word if by doing so it will be against his interests. Plausible reasons always abound for the Prince to cloak a breach of faith. He can get away with deception and dishonesty because people are, in general, gullible, fickle and are motivated by selfish interests. The Prince who is given to deception will always find willing dupes. He is not expected to observe the rules of conduct in the preservation of his princedom. If he succeeds in his project of self preservation the end will justify the means.

In the author's view the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) has, for a number of years been a princedom ruled by a prince whose leadership style has been ruthlessly political. Political management is neither based on conventional management theories and principles nor are decisions and actions governed by the rules of rationality. The objective of political management is to acquire and use power towards selfish ends.

The purpose of this book is to present an insider's account of corruption and mismanagement in the secretariat of a regional NGO whose mandate is the education of adults and the eradication of illiteracy.

Those who are engaged in the study of NGO management and management of NGOs can now replace their hypothetical cases with a real-life story. Read on!

What this book is about

This book is about political management of an NGO; it is about organizational mismanagement; it is about resistance to change in a rapidly changing environment; it is about the author's experience in the AALAE secretariat between 1991 and 1996. Organizational mismanagement is examined against the background of accepted principles and norms of behaviour in a modern organization.

This book is addressed to African NGO managers and staff, and all those who are in the business of managing (or mismanaging) NGOs. If it sets them thinking about their role in managing or mismanaging an organization, the author's objective would have been achieved.

It is hoped that the book will contribute not only to re-thinking NGO management but also to generating discussion on the nature and purpose of NGOs in Africa.

> **My only proviso is that the NGOs be genuine people's organizations and not just a cover for crooks seeking to make money or gain prestige for themselves**
>
> *Mwalimu Julius Nyerere*

INTRODUCTION

The twelve year history of AALAE (1984 - 1996), has been a period of acquiring, using and consolidating the power of a secretary general. This process witnessed the destruction of real and imagined "power" bases, and the dismantling of the legal framework of the Association. The Constitution of AALAE and the internal rules and procedures of the secretariat have largely been ignored with contempt. Trickery, craftiness, cunning and deceit have been the tools of the secretary general's trade. His aggressiveness in consolidating power while acquiring more power has been matched by his ruthlessness in eliminating anyone who is perceived as a potential threat. Crying wolf has been his favourite pastime. He is adept at creating crises and managing them to his advantage. For example, it is widely believed that, the "1993 financial crisis" was a hoax created to facilitate the sacking of five members of staff as a strategy to get rid of one of them whose termination had long been on the cards because it was a political hot potato given the complexity of ethnic relationships and "political" alliances that had been formed.

The secretary general, a hard core African politician, knows his politics very well. An ardent follower of the teachings of Lenin and Mao, his repertoire of schemes in self preservation is inexhaustible. African politics in this context means the art of conmanship. In a Ugandan language it is called *pokopoko*.

He revelled in the 'glory' of the cold war but the dismantling of the Berlin wall and the ignominous fall of the Soviet Union brought about a 'new order' in which cold warrior tactics became obsolete. What is more, with the advent of democratisation and economic liberalisation it was no longer prudent to employ cold-warrior tactics as means of personal and organizational survival.

His mastery of cold-war politics and comprehension of the geopolitical situation did not help him to come to terms with the changes that were unfolding. Openness, accountability, participation, and democracy which were the clarion calls in organizational rethink were anathema. Little wonder therefore that AALAE, under the leadership of the secretary general, is tottering on the brink of collapse.

For Southern NGOs in general and African NGOs in particular, the Eastern European factor has had serious implications for policies, programmes and styles of management that are inhumane. But AALAE, among others, seemed oblivious to the changes that were unfolding and continued with business as usual. Actions to change were cosmetic and calculated at treating the symptoms rather than the causes of organizational dysfunction.

Lots of time was wasted analysing the global situation and blaming the "North" and the "West" for the ills of Africa. Passing the buck became an exercise in escapism. Members of the AALAE Executive Council were treated to discourses and theatrics on the global situation but these were nothing more than an exercise of paralysis by analysis. To the less gullible and suspecting it soon became apparent that AALAE was grinding to a halt ... the writing was on the wall.

Change in response to a changing environment was not in the secretary general's scheme of things. He talked glibly about decentralization as he took action to tighten his hold on power. He discussed 'plans' for local resource mobilization and did nothing to actualise them. He talked about changing the image of AALAE but continued with his cold-war rhetoric and confrontational style of leadership. He lamented the fact that the members of AALAE were not participating in the affairs of their organization but took action to further marginalize them. He proposed participatory evaluation but took absolute control of the process. As he talked about cost-cutting he embarked on spending sprees with glee.

This book is about an imagined organizational crisis which became real. But unlike previous crises the current crisis has gone out of the secretary general's control because the environment has changed and his style has become old fashioned.

When all is said and done, the essence of machiavellianism is a recipe for self destruction; it cannot be sustained. What is sustainable is 'virtue' which should be pursued in "the Republic".

In his *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, Niccolo Machievelli distinguishes republics (free states) from princedoms (unfree states). The former, in his estimation, are superior to the latter in a number of ways; for example, in the republic there is a high degree of 'virtue'.

The challenge for the members, partners, donors and well wishers of AALAE is to transform the princedom of AALAE into the republic of AALAE in which the "rulers" are the members and other stakeholders. The gates of the republic of AALAE should henceforth be jealously and zealously guarded against another tyrant trumpeting social justice and human rights.

Never again should the members of AALAE, and other NGOs as well, be conned into 'electing' people of dubious character and corrupt habits to lead them.

There is general disillusionment with the state because of its inability to provide basic social services and security. There is general impoverishment and pauperization of the people in rural areas and urban slums - largely caused by the unjust terms of trade, misuse, mismanagement of public funds and corruption at all levels of society, starting from the top.

Paul Wangoola

1

AFRICAN NGOs: SOME MYTHS AND REALITIES

NGOs have gained pre-eminence because it is assumed that the neo-colonial state "has failed to deliver". Failure to deliver, it is argued, is not through accident, but rather by design. Being creatures of the colonial powers at whose behest they exist, African states are mere symbols -the flag, the national anthem. The degree of their economic dependence makes the purported political independence laughable.

It is however becoming apparent that African NGOs, in general, may not be any better than the state. Many of them mirror the state's inability to deliver. They are undemocratic and are led by corrupt people who are exceedingly intolerant of dissenting views. By and large they are microcosms of the state.

It may be asking too much to expect African NGOs to be different and be seen to be different from the state. Some were even created by the state or exist in the image of the state having been absorbed into the state structure and culture. What is more, many NGOs operate in the same corrupt environment and have as leaders politicians who are biding their time to walk the corridors of political power. These leaders have no genuine commitment to people-centred development or to social justice; they are inherently corrupt. What is important is their survival, and it is generally believed that, organisations that are able to survive have to be led by smooth-talking wheeler-dealers with all the "right" jargon and direct telephone links with those who control the money. In Africa, the greatest danger lies in the fact that it is the elite (whose counterparts man the state apparatus), those without a global vision of the future of their countries or a desire to fundamentally transform social and political power relations, who are quick to capitalise on the growing emphasis on NGOs[1].

The editor of *Africa World Review* rightly argues that NGOs can never replace the state in the provision of healthcare, education, physical and socio-economic infrastructure. Their capacity to provide a serious base for the development of any country is limited.

Although I have stated a generalisation about African NGOs, it would be unfair to conclude that all African NGOs are fetid. The majority, from my observation spanning over twenty-five years, are corrupt, inept, inefficient and unprofessional. However, there are emerging a new generation of NGOs and NGO managers who are striving for professional excellence in the conduct of social development affairs. These include religious-based NGOs and some literacy organisations operating at the national level.

It should also be stated that corruption, inefficiency and unprofessionalism are not peculiar to African NGOs. These are the "tools of the trade" of some Northern NGOs (See, for example, Graham Hancock's *Lords of Poverty*). It could also be said that the inefficiency, corruption and unprofessionalism inherent in many African NGOs are a reflection of the environment in which they operate and of the relationship between them and some Northern NGOs.

A number of writers have warned about the dangers of entrusting the wellbeing of a people to NGOs; they instead call for the building of accountable state structures through popular democracy and mechanisms to ensure that development resources do not end up in the pockets of a few.[2]

The NGO Myth

The following myths represent a sample of the views and opinions which have been expressed over the years about NGOs in general.

MYTH 1

NGOs have the capacity to reach the poor and vulnerable

Poverty has been growing by leaps and bounds on the African continent inspite of the increase in development aid. It is estimated that 6.4 billion US dollars was spent in Africa by NGOs in 1989 alone. The rural areas and urban slums where the majority of the people (the poor) live do not have the basic necessities of life. Poverty is caused by a combination of factors among them state and NGO corruption. Many African NGOs do not have the capability to satisfy the needs of their constituents. Instead of satisfying they dissatisfy as is evidenced by the graveyards of failed or abandoned development programmes or projects.

The majority of African NGOs are not sustainable because they depend one hundred percent on external sources of funding. If they cannot satisfy their own needs, using their own resources, how can they satisfy the needs of others? What is more, resources mobilised externally are largely mismanaged as will be shown later.

One does not need research evidence to say that the majority of Africans are poorer today than they were at independence over thirty years ago. If independence has meant anything, it has meant high-level corruption, mismanagement, theft of public resources, civil strife, social disintegration, destruction and death. The evidence in Uganda before the National Resistance Movement government, in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zaire, to name a few, is staggering and horrendous. In another publication[3] the author has discussed the causes of poverty in Africa, and has made suggestions on how to break out of the vicious cycle of endemic poverty. Developing the capacity of the people to take charge of their own affairs is a possible strategy. But those who seek to develop capacity must first develop their own capacity.

Capacity should be seen in the ability of NGOs to design programmes which emerge from, and address the needs of the poor. It should be evidenced by internal democratic practices, authentic participation by the poor in determining the purpose, nature and form of development. NGOs can not reach the poor if they fail to counter those larger forces which create and sustain poverty.

MYTH 2

NGOs are better placed than governments to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable

The delivery capacity of many NGOs is questionable. Not only have they been "jack-of-all and master-of-none", they have also failed to learn to focus and to create a niche for themselves in the development landscape. Today they clamour for environment issues, tomorrow will be HIV/AIDS, then onto women, then poverty; another time democracy, civil society and human rights. Lack of specialisation breeds superficiality.

Specialisation accords identity, professionalism and legitimacy. For the specialist NGOs their work is often hamstrung by a weak research base especially in the area of policy. Policy research provides leverage for advocacy. Without the hard facts of underdevelopment, advocacy is reduced to mere political campaigning and heckling.

It was the need for a policy and advocacy niche that led to the establishment of MWENGO (*Mwelekeo Wa NGO*), a reflection and development centre headquartered in Harare, Zimbabwe. MWENGO "seeks to harness the capacities of NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa to articulate and implement an African development agenda rooted in on-going experiences and analyses."

Collaboration between African NGOs and research institutes or development studies institutes could be a way of building capacities for research and advocacy. A lot, for example, has been said about going back to our roots, but direction is needed in the journey back. NGOs can provide leadership in identifying what was good in the past that can be of value in the present.

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MYTH 3

NGO work is characterized by innovation and flexibility

Innovation is a departure from stereo-typical development practices. It should not only characterise the work of NGOs, but should be reflected in their vision, mission, goals, objectives, programmes, structures, relationships, funding strategies as well etc. Pouring old wines into new bottles will not do. Innovation should pervade all aspects of NGO form and operation. However innovative an NGO is, in terms of its modes of operation, reliance on external resources would detract from its capacity to innovate. Innovation should be seen in the blossoming of home-grown initiatives that have an impact on the quality of people's lives.

MYTH 4

NGOs have greater potential than government bureaucracies for empowering people at the grassroots to achieve self-reliant development

The IMF-World Bank sponsored civil service reforms in a number of African countries have created a large pool of retired servile (civil) servants, many of whom have formed NGOs or are leading NGOs. Being civil servants they have brought to the NGO world their baggage of bureaucratic practices which the passage of time will not allow them to unlearn. What emerges is a situation of disempowerment at the grassroots. NGOs must first empower themselves if they are to be able to empower others.

A roll call of NGO leaders will indicate that a majority have been state operatives. Without internalising the NGO work ethic and culture, they continue business as usual. Can they really be different from the state?

MYTH 5

African NGOs are people's organizations

Many African NGOs have questionable representative character. Starting as truly membership/people's organizations they soon degenerate into oligarchies. The membership is marginalized, popular ownership is lost and accountability becomes a favour rather than an obligation. Consequently, the needs of the people which constitute the *raison d'etre* of NGOs can not be addressed in any meaningful way.

MYTH 6

NGOs complement the development efforts of governments

NGOs and governments must collaborate to make development happen. But with lack of mutual trust, and irreconcilable differences in development vision and approaches a mutual basis for collaboration hardly exists. What does exist is a situation of suspicion.

In many cases NGOs are having to repair the damage caused by government policies and actions, high-level corruption in the corridors of power, for example, is a major cause of poverty and social disintegration. NGOs are therefore hamstrung to support government policies in whose formulation they have played no part. Complementarity should be based on shared vision and values, mutual trust and comparative advantage. What is the comparative advantage of NGOs?

For development to take place there must be
accountability and integrity

Mwengo

References & Endnotes/Chap 1

1. "Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): A Trojan Horse?" *Africa World Review*, May - September 1994, p.5.
2. See, for example, Hancock, G. *Lords of Poverty*, London, Macmillan, 1989.
3. Thompson Ekundayo J.D. "Breaking out of the circle of poverty in Africa: Community Education and Empowerment" Paper presented at the 6th World Conference of the International Community Education Association (ICEA), Jomtien, Thailand 31st July - 4th August, 1995.

2

WHO OWNS AALAE?

Ownership in this context is about initiation and control of policies and programmes. According to the constitution of AALAE, ownership of the Association is vested in the members. In real terms however, it is the secretary general who owns the Association as a discussion of the reality on the ground would show.

The Legal Framework of AALAE

AALAE operates within a legal framework which is made up of the Laws of Kenya, the NGO Coordination Act, the Employment Act, the Income Tax Act, the Immigration Act, and the AALAE Constitution.

The Constitution of AALAE

The basic law of AALAE is the Constitution which provides the general legal framework within which the affairs of the Association ought to be conducted. The writers of the AALAE constitution meant well by allowing flexibility and room for discretion. In legal terminology there are lacunae in the constitution. This, as evidence would show, has been manipulated and exploited to the advantage of the secretary general and to the disadvantage of the Association. Even where the constitution is clear about how the affairs of the Association should be conducted it has largely been ignored because, according to the secretary general, "it seeks to freeze reality". Following are the provisions of the constitution which have been violated with impunity.

Article VI: Obligations and Rights of Members

Section 10 (2) provides that:

> A register of members giving the name, category of membership, record of fee payments, and address of each member, the date of his/her admission to membership, shall be maintained by the Association.

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A register of members has not been kept by the Association since 1987.[4] The issue of the absence of a register of members is an important one because it gives the secretary general room to manoeuvre with regard to participation in AALAE's activities. It is common knowledge that a number of people who are not AALAE members have enjoyed benefits and privileges that are normally reserved for members. "Strangers" have preponderated in AALAE's meetings. Secondly, payments of membership subscriptions cannot be verified in the absence of a register. Thirdly, the absence of a register provides space for non-accountability. Given the general lack of commitment and disempowerment of "the membership", non-accountability has indeed been facilitated.

Article VII: Organization and Administration of the Association

Section 11 (3) provides for the administrative organs of the Association.

(i) The General Assembly
(ii) The Executive Council
(iii) The Board of Trustees
(iv) The Secretariat

Section 12: Membership

(1) There shall be a General Assembly which shall be the supreme body of the Association.
(2) The General Assembly of the Association will consist of fully paid up individual, institutional, associate, life, honorary, and national association members.

In the absence of a register of members it would be impossible to determine who the fully paid-up members of AALAE are. The categories of membership do not exist in reality because many members in those categories have been marginalised. University departments, institutes and centres of adult education, for example, have ceased to be members of AALAE. Members of university departments, institutes and centres of adult education are leading members of their national associations or councils of adult education. Consequently, they have found more space to practise adult education in those bodies which are closer to action on the ground. What is more, those bodies are not constrained by university bureaucracy and are free to "do adult education" outside the university walls. Membership of university departments lapsed partly due to non payment of susbscriptions and low level or non-participation of their members.

But the main reason for membership redundancy of university departments is the secretary general's apparent unconcealed hostility towards adult education professionals and staff of university departments of adult education. The secretary general's hostility is borne of his preference for an amorphous mass of grassroot members who would not rock the boat. Secondly, the predecessors of AALAE - the African Adult Education Association (AAEA) and the Afrolit Society (Afrolit) had a large population of university people who were described as too "technicist" and "legalistic". The real reason, however, for the secretary general's hostility towards university people is that they are hard to manipulate. The post - 1987 history of AALAE has clearly demonstrated this fact.

The constitution provides the following functions for the General Assembly:

- to review the role and policies of the Association;
- to amend the constitution;
- to receive triennial and other reports and proposals for action from the Executive Council;
- to define the duties and responsibilities of the officers of the Association;
- to elect the Trustees of the Association;
- to appoint the Auditors of the Association.

Two General Assemblies have been held in 1987 and 1990 respectively. Some of the gaps in the constitution should have been filled by the General Assembly in 1987, for example, definition of the duties and responsibilities of the officers of the Association. But the Assembly proceedings were more ceremonial than substantive; policy matters were conspicuously absent from the agenda. The fact that it was the first meeting of the membership "warranted" a relaxed atmosphere. To this day the duties and responsibilities of the officers have not been defined. We shall see the implications and consequences of this later.

According to the constitution "the General Assembly shall meet once in every three years". The last meeting of the Assembly was in 1990. The next which should have been in 1993 did not take place because "there was no money". The "real" reason, as speculated, was that the secretary general was shopping for a puppet successor to the out-going chairman who, after two three- year terms, was no-longer eligible for re-election. Since no "suitable" candidate could be found, the General Assembly was 'postponed'. It should be noted that it was in 1993 that AALAE received the highest level of funding in the Association's history, amounting to KSh. 43,218,343 (US $ 1 million). This amount could have included funds mobilised for the General Assembly.

Article IX: Executive Council

The Executive Council is elected by the General Assembly and comprises of the officers of the Association who are elected for a period of three years. "The tenure of office of the officers and members of the Executive Council shall be three years subject to re-election" (Section 18). The present Executive Council, has therefore been in office illegally for three years (1993 - 1996).

Contrary to the provision of the Constitution that the executive council meets once a year, no meeting of the Executive Council has been held since 1993. Its pre-1993 meetings had not addressed most of the functions assigned to it by the Constitution including the appointment of a secretary general. The present "secretary general" is in office illegally since he was never appointed by the Executive.

The Secretary General is Illegal

The 1988 Bujumbura Crisis was created by the issue of the appointment of a secretary general. Some members of the Executive Council had raised the issue of appointment in accordance with the Constitution and demanded that a secretary general be appointed. The meeting ended without the appointment of a secretary general[5].

The issue of the appointment of a secretary general came up again in 1990 after the Second General Assembly. According to the minutes of the 8th meeting of the AALAE Executive Council held on 10 November, 1990 at Mahatma Gandi Institute, Moka, Mauritius,

> *"Bernadette Fumbuka proposed that since it is the duty of the Executive Council to appoint a secretary general, the council should proceed to do so"* (Minute 3.1).
>
> *"The chairman and secretary explained that the incumbent secretary general was appointed by the First General Assembly ...."* (Minute 3.2)

That "explanation" fraudulently disposed of the issue of the most powerful person in the Association.

The First General Assembly which was convened in Nairobi in 1987 never appointed a secretary general because it had no legal mandate to do so. Even if it did appoint a secretary general, such action would have been ultra vires the Constitution. But it did not and, those who attended, including the author, can testify to the fact that the First General Assembly did not appoint a secretary general. Appointment of the secretary general is the duty of the Executive Council which is charged with the following functions (Cap. 19):

- to implement the decisions of the General Assembly;
- to appoint the secretary general and senior staff of the Association;
- to supervise the secretary general and executive staff;
- to consider proposals presented to it by the secretary general or by its Task Forces;
- to have general supervision of the finances of the Association and to receive annual reports and audited statements of accounts of the Association for presentation to the General Assembly;
- to recommend Auditors of the Association for appointment by the General Assembly;
- to appoint members of the Programmes, and Finance and other standing committees whose chairmen shall be members of the Executive Council.

Wisdom of the Constitution Writers

When the AALAE constitution was being written, the issue of the appointment of the secretary general was hotly debated. Some of the members of the Constitution Committee wanted the General Assembly to elect the secretary general so that the person elected would be accountable to the General Assembly. Others, including the incumbent secretary general, argued that it would not be in the interest of the Association for the secretary general to be elected. He opined that election would make the secretary general a "politician" who would have parity of status with the members of the executive who constitutionally should supervise him. The consensus was that the secretary general, as an employee of the Association, could not be elected. What was more, the members did not wish that the position of secretary general be politicised given the political nature of the General Assembly, and the emotions which elections generate.

It was great wonder, therefore, that the chairman and the incumbent secretary general explained that the 1987 General Assembly had elected a secretary general. The minutes and report of that Assembly make no reference to such election.

Bujumbura therefore, marked the beginning of the end of AALAE. Dishonesty and fraud had gained supremacy.

Article X: Secretariat

The secretary general is the administrative head and chief executive of the Association with responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the headquarters of the Association. He is also responsible for the appointment of junior staff.

In the absence of the General Assembly and the Executive Council the secretary general has arrogated to himself the right to perform the constitutional functions of the General Assembly, the Executive Council, and the Board of Trustees which has rarely met since it was appointed. It is not surprising therefore that there were speculation that assets of the Association had been disposed of without reference to the Board of Trustees.

Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC)

This is a standing advisory committee of the Executive Council charged with the responsibility of supervising the secretary general and executive staff. It is composed of the chairman of the Board of Trustees, the treasurer, a financial advisor and one other member. The secretary general is an ex-officio member and secretary of the committee.

In the author's view, the Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) has been exceedingly inefficient and prone to manipulation by the secretary general. The committee did not meet except the secretary general wanted it to meet. When it met, it rubber stamped decisions of the secretary general. Its terms of reference are not stated in writing and its internal rules and procedures are non existent. Its meetings were generally held at lunch time when it was easier to rubber stamp the secretary general's proposals after sumptuous meals and drinks. SAC meetings have never been meetings in the true sense of the word.

The Right of Members to Know

The constitution of AALAE makes ample provision for the members to be informed. Article XII (27) provides that "All minutes of the General Assemblies shall be sent to all voting members". Article XV (37) provides that "A copy of the Auditor's report on the accounts and statements together with such accounts shall be furnished to all members after they have been received by the Executive Council".

Article XVIII (43) provides that "The books of accounts and all documents thereto and a register of all members of the Association shall be available for inspection at the Headquarters of the Association ..."

These provisions have largely been ignored. Financial matters, especially reports, have been kept as top secrets in AALAE. Even the treasurer had complained about lack of adequate information with regard to financial transactions, the fact that she routinely signed the audited accounts notwithstanding. In her letter of resignation dated 16th May, 1996 she said that she "signed audit reports in good faith totally unaware ..."

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The Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Act (No. 19 of 1990)

The Act makes provision for the registration and co-ordination of Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya. A non-governmental organisation is defined as

> *"a private voluntary grouping of individuals or Associations, not operated for profit or for other commercial purposes but which have organized themselves nationally or internationally for the promotion of social welfare, development, charity or research through mobilisation of resources"*[6]

The Act provides for an NGO Coordination Board whose chairman is appointed by the President of the Republic of Kenya. The functions of the Board includes receipt and discussion of the annual reports of NGOs, provision of policy guidelines to non-governmental organizations with regard to harmonisation of NGO activities in relation to national development in Kenya, and approval of the code of conduct for self regulation of NGOs and their activities.

The Act makes it mandatory for every NGO to register and provide for "a collective forum of all the voluntary agencies registered under the Act". It also makes provision for the NGO Council, which is the collective forum, to develop and adopt a code of conduct to facilitate self-regulation.

The Non-Governmental Organizations Council Code of Conduct, 1995.

According to the NGOs Councils Code of Conduct "every registered organization shall observe the cardinal values of probity[7], self-regulation, justice, service, co-operation, prudence and respect".

It further provides that "in the observance of probity, an organization shall:

(a) perform its duties incorruptibly;

(b) not abuse any privilege availed to it;

(c) not solicit or accept gifts, rewards or any advantage, whether pecuniary or otherwise, from any person as an inducement to do anything in its official capacity or to grant any favour to any person;

(d) at all times avoid any conflict between official and private interests.

NGOs are enjoined by the Act to practice fairness and adhere to and uphold the rule of law.[8]

The Constitution of AALAE and the Laws of Kenya provide adequate safeguards for accountability. To these can be added the Funding Agreements signed between

AALAE and Donor Agencies or Partners which obligate AALAE to be accountable. Practice and conduct, however, indicate glaring lack of accountability. Evidence will be adduced to support this assertion.

> **There comes a time in the life of every organisation to re-examine its raison d'être, the relevance of its programming, its leadership, its management, its methodology, to better achieve the vision for which it stands**
>
> International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

Reference and Notes

4. The year 1987 is important because it was in that year that the First General Assembly of AALAE was held, and the constitution adopted.
5. In 1988 the AALAE Executive Council met in Bujumbura, Burundi in keeping with the practice of rotating the venue for executive council meetings.
6. Government Printer, **Kenya Gazette Supplement Acts, 1991. Nairobi.** 18th January, 1991, pp. 8 - 22.
7. "Probity" means the exercise of responsibility, accountability, trustworthiness and integrity.
8. Kenya Gazette Suplement No. 59, **The Non-Governmental Organizations Council Code of Conduct, 1995.**

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3

ORGANIZATIONAL DYSFUNCTION

NGO Management

For a long time, there has been a state of flux in NGO management. Conventional management principles and practices have not been observed by NGO "managers" whose mnagement has largely been whimsical and an exercise in trial and error. The whims of the "manager", by and large, dictate how things are to be done. There are a number of reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, by their nature, mandate and operational environment, NGOs cannot be managed like business. Secondly, NGOs are in the business of social development which is time consuming and is circumscribed by the principles and methodologies that recognise the inalienable right of the beneficiaries. Thirdly, the cultural dimension is an important factor in the management of African institutions including NGOs. Culture, by and large, determines how things are done.

But market forces and scarcity of development resources are now dictating change in how NGOs are managed. Proposals for change in management styles have taken into account the need to maintain "the NGO identity". Peters and Waterman, for example, have adapted business management principles to the NGO situation. These include closeness to the target groups or beneficiaries, establishment of centres of excellence, respect for people, respect for the values of the organisation, specialisation and comparative advantage, simplicity of structure, decentralisation in unity.[3]

Management in AALAE

The "management culture" which evolved in AALAE is a product of the ideological orientation of the secretary general, whose management style, in the author's view, has been dangerously whimsical. His resentment for rules and procedures, hostility to professionals and "good management" is borne of his penchant for muddling through. He sees "good management" as a means of control by Northern donors calculated to impose their dominant organisational culture by disempowering and bogging people down with "trivialities" such as writing of reports and accounting for money.

From observation spanning over five years, the secretary general's aversion for rules, systems, procedures and processes stems from his belief that people should be free to do what they like irrespective of legal obligations, collective decisions, corporate policy and established procedures. This attitude has been the cause of the perennial problems which AALAE has had and which has marred its relationship with donors and partners. Organisational recklessness has been the rule in AALAE.

Crisis Management

The dominant management culture has been crisis management and management by crisis. The crisis management theory holds that a critical situation always existed necessitating emergency measures to deal with it. AALAE has been through a number of critical situations. These include the following:

Crisis of the Cold War

AALAE was led into the cold war by its cold-warrior secretary general. The exigencies of the cold war meant that resources had to be mobilised to fight it. Consequently, literacy and adult education were abandoned in favour of cold-war rhetoric and diatribe. The pages of AALAE's publications testify to the cold-war hogwash.

The Crisis of the North

AALAE has been locked in fierce battles with the North. Northern donors came in for severe reprimand and bashing whenever the opportunity presented itself. Official donors in particular were singled out for abuse because they were administering funds provided by their governments. Everything had to be done to teach the North a lesson even if that meant overt racist disposition, rebuke and ridicule.

The Crisis of the Membership of AALAE

The goal of the secretary general had been to cut the membership down to size. In order to do this he had to be free of all constitutional encumberances. To that end, he resisted being appointed by the membership so that he would not be accountable to them. The constitutional organs were kept at bay. In the absence of the General Assembly, the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee, the secretary general had a free reign to determine and implement policies and programmes. The *Mpambo* predator (see chapters 4 and 5) is an example of the secretary general's initiatives which did not have the mandate of the Executive Council but which has been developed using official resources.

The ICAE Crisis

The ICAE crisis had its roots in the debacle of the ICAE Women Network Programme. The crisis was a consequence of the AALAE secretary general's propensity to control. Details of the ICAE Crisis to which reference is made in chapters 5 and 13, will be discussed later.

AALAE Programme Crisis

The objective of the programme evaluation was to placate donors and partners who were concerned about AALAE's drift away from adult education and literacy. The design of the evaluation, its processes and outcomes were controlled by the secretary general who ignored many of the recommendations soon after they were made. The Evaluation Report had recommended that Networks be rationalised. But before the Executive Council could meet to receive the report, the Networks were jettisoned. The meeting of the Executive Council which had been convened to receive the evaluation report was called off at very short notice, and without consultation with the programme officer.

The Crisis of the AALAE Secretariat

In many ways the AALAE secretariat was a police state. Espionage, intelligence gathering, intimidation, secrecy in the handling of financial matters and false bonhomie were its main features. Decision making was uncompromisingly dictatorial. Major decisions were made elsewhere and imposed at "staff *barazas*" which were summoned at very short notice. Personal correspondence of senior members of staff were "mistakenly" opened and delivered with an "apology".

Crisis of the Global Situation

Everything that went wrong in AALAE was said to be a consequence of the global situation. Misuse of funds, late reporting to donors and partners, administrative and financial mismanagement, inefficiency, lack of accountability were all "attributed to the global situation". Meetings of the Executive Council and the SAC were treated to recitations on the global situation. As the "global situation" worsened so did the local situation in AALAE. Passing the buck became a familiar activity in which the secretary general was adept. The causes of AALAE's problems were rationalised and blamed on external sources.

The 1993 Financial Crisis

The 11th meeting of the AALAE Executive Council which was held in Nairobi from 16 to 17 September 1993 was informed that a crisis existed. The financial report which was presented to the meeting indicated that there was a "serious financial crisis". Consequently, the Executive Council decided, on the advice of the secretary general, to terminate the services of five members of staff as a cost-cutting measure. It was later revealed that there never was any crisis and that the Executive Council had been misinformed. It was in 1993 that AALAE mobilised US $ 1 million, the highest in the history of the Association (See Table 1 below):

Table 1: ***AALAE's income between 1987 to 1995***

Year	*Income in KShs*
1987	8,685,747
1988	12,952,665
1989	18,181,874
1990	22,282,842
1991	25,085,164
1992	30,652,869
1993	43,218,343
1994	31,843,784
1995	16,437,080

Source: AALAE Financial Report presented to the Chairman's Consultative meeting on 7th and 8th October 1995

Reference

9 Peters, T. and Waterman R., "In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best - Run Companies" cited in Piers Campbell, "Management Development and Development Management for Voluntary Organizations" adapted from "The Management of NGOs: An Overview" Paper presented at the South-East Asian Seminar on "NGO Management Development and Training" held in Tagatay City, the Philippines on 18 - 23 January, 1987.

4

THE CURRENT CRISIS: BACKGROUND, CAUSES, AND ESSENCE

AALAE has not held a General Assembly since 1990, contrary to the Constitution. The 1993 meeting did not take place because of a "financial crisis." The Executive Council has not met since 1993 when it took a decision to terminate the services of five members of staff as a "cost-cutting" measure. The Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) did not meet between 1993 and October 1995, because a meeting was not necessary. The Board of Trustees has not met since it was elected in 1987. In the absence of these constitutional organs the secretary general has had unlimited powers and freedom not only to determine policies and programmes but also to implement them. It is believed that the plot to dismantle the Association and convert its assets to private use was hatched during this period of dictatorship. Details of the plot which were revealed in October, 1995 will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Of Schemes and Schemers

"AALAE has outlived its usefulness."

"A new form of organisation is necessary."

It was reported that, the secretary general made these stunning statements several times in the presence of some AALAE members. Although he was not taken seriously then, the statements were a warning that AALAE was in grave danger, and so was the membership.

The statement that AALAE was no longer useful was made at a time when the idea of *Mpambo* was being articulated. Donor and partner funds which were provided specifically for mainstream adult education programmes were diverted to develop the *Mpambo* idea into a fully fledged "successor organisation". Several workshops, strategic reflections and meetings took place apparently to discuss AALAE business, but ostensibly to midwife the birth of *Mpambo*. The author was one of those who participated in the *Mpambo* meetings without prior knowledge of what the real agenda was.

The Gender, Culture and the African Family Programme of the AALAE Women Network was used as a *Mpambo* camouflage. A strategic reflection meeting which was convened in Bulawayo and hosted by the Organisation for Rural Progress in Africa (ORAP) prepared the way for *Mpambo*. Although this was an AALAE Women Network affair the members of the Network were not in charge of the process and outcomes, which were closely guided and guarded. The so-called grassroots participants who attended, in addition to members of the women Network, were hand-picked to support the scheme.

The first reflection on Gender, Culture and the African Family "triggered off several follow-up reflections and initiatives" including a mandate "to Mr. Paul Wangoola to coordinate follow-up action". He reported later that to push forward the outcomes of the first reflection, a second one was necessary, and this was convened in 1993. The second reflection concluded that for the African people to regain the initiative it was essential for them to endogenously develop and institute an educational system centred around the community.

So it was that *Mpambo* became the initiative triggered off by the Bulawayo Women Network strategic reflection, and the Women Network Programme was "handed over" to Mr. Paul Wangoola for coordination.[10]

A number of the members of the AALAE Women Network were aggrieved at what transpired in Bulawayo, and were suspicious and hysterical of what was in the offing. They resented the hijacking of their Network and programme by the secretary general, and resolved to resist his acts of manipulation. But they were not the only ones who were "shocked and saddened" by Bulawayo. One of the participants, a prominent Nigerian medical doctor who coordinated a grassroots development organisation in Nigeria, described the Bulawayo meeting as opprobrious. He was critical of the process which, in the view of some of the participants, was dominated by "the whims and capricious tendencies of the secretary general".[11]

Convinced that AALAE was "an undemocratic organisation" which would be difficult to reform, he voted with his feet. For him Bulawayo marked the end of his relationship with AALAE. He left and has never returned.

The members of the Women Network continued with their struggle in a bid to wrest control of their Network from the clutches of the secretary general. The bitter struggle took a different dimension when it manifested itself in the combat for control of the Women Network Programme of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). The bone of contention was the location of the programme.

In keeping with the decision to rotate the location of the Programme, Africa was requested to host it. Naturally the AALAE Women Network had the

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opportunity and onus to host an important international women's programme. Hosting of the Programme had implications for provision of resources by ICAE. What was more, hosting, it was conjectured, would accord the host enormous influence both political and programmatic. Being aware of these benefits and potential power of the Programme the secretary general wasted no time in demanding that the Programme be hosted by AALAE in the Nairobi secretariat. Action was speedily taken to secure additional office space and furniture, and machinery was set in motion for the appointment of a Coordinator; infact a name for the post was immediately floated by the secretary general, without consultation. The Women resisted and insisted that Senegal, and not the AALAE secretariat, should host the programme. They got their way and took the programme to Dakar where it is now being coordinated.

The result of that ICAE Women Programme saga was the disintegration of the AALAE Women Network and the departure of the members and others from AALAE. It was also the immediate cause of the ICAE Crisis which, it is believed, was created to punish the erstwhile ICAE secretary general for her temerity in supporting and facilitating the AALAE Women to take the programme to Dakar. Although AALAE lost the Women Programme the battle to oust the erstwhile ICAE secretary general and all those who had supported her was "won". [12]

The ICAE Crisis is an important issue because it brings to the fore the fact that a few people described as the "Gang of Four", wielded enormous power over matters of "life and death" in ICAE. The tragedy of this fact is that some of those who called and continue to call the ICAE shots have neither legal nor moral authority in their own organisations. This is the tragedy of the global adult education movement.

The recent decision to convert ICAE into an inter-regional organisation did not take account of the fact that in some of the member regional organisations, AALAE in particular, the members have no say in determining policies and programmes.

Gangsterism and the forces of autocracy have now pervaded ICAE. This is against all the principles and values that adult educators espouse and propound and should be resisted!

Poor AALAE - Donor/Partner Relations

AALAE - DVV Relations

AALAE - DVV relations came to an all time low with the publication of the 'Great Debate' in *The Spider* (The Newsletter of AALAE) Vol. 6 No. 1 of March, 1992. The communication by Wolfgang Leumer of DVV on the programmes of AALAE was a God-sent opportunity for those who had been basking in anti-white reflexes to pour venom and scorn at DVV. The secretary general of AALAE had never concealed his revulsion for DVV which in his perception "is a representation of neo-colonialism". DVV was rebuked "for being part of the German government's foreign policy instrument and a competitor with AALAE in adult education in Africa". The secretary general was uncompromising in his stand that, as far as adult education is concerned, Africa is AALAE's preserve, the fact that AALAE was not doing much notwithstanding. Revulsion of DVV and the North is borne out of ideological and racist disposition. The fact of racism was characterising AALAE's relations with Northern NGOs and was giving AALAE a bad name. The secretary general explains:

> *"Pokopoko" in Lusoga-Luganda means the practice by Africans of the whiteman's policies; the art of talking a lot without content, empty talk, unreliable, big public promises to secure public support without any intention of keeping any of them; sweet talk, the art of conmanship.* [13]

He believes that,

> *The influx into Africa of Northern "experts" is part of a conscious programme to recolonise and intensify the conquest of the African peoples so as to directly rule them.* [14]

The secretary general spared no pains in pointing out "the sins" of Northern NGOs:

> *I should also point out that virtually without exception, the Northern NGOs we relate with are either exclusively or mainly funded by their governments. Indeed some do not qualify to be called NGOs; they are actually parastatals.*
>
> *It is critical therefore to be aware that Northern NGOs are an instrument of hegemonic policies of imperialism; they are the sugar-coated fuel bombs of the North.* [15]

Many members of AALAE have complained about the confrontational politics of the secretary general and its consequences not only on the image of AALAE but also on the relationship with donors and partners. But as he continued his ferocious onslaught on the donors so did he continue, with alacrity, to feed fat on the funds which they provided. At present AALAE is in a serious financial crisis. The donors and partners have suspended support pending explanation on the use of the funds which they had provided. AALAE is tottering on the brink of collapse because it can not survive without donor funds. The secretary general cannot even get his salary which was paid by the Northern NGOs.

Although the membership of AALAE were convinced that the confrontational political style of leadership did not in any way represent official AALAE policy, they were concerned that the secretary general was giving AALAE a bad name.

They called for rationality and dialogue in AALAE's relations with donors and partners. One member said in disgust:

> *"He can't be fighting twenty-four hours. He needs time to sleep and regain his energy to fight another day!"*

Most of the members of AALAE shared the views expressed not only by Wolfgang Leumer but of the other partners and donors of AALAE who had repeatedly called on the secretariat to behave responsibly by honouring the terms of Programme Agreements which AALAE signed.

The issues and concerns which were raised in the so-called "Great Debate" are the very issues and concerns which are bringing AALAE to its knees because they have not been addressed. And what are the issues and concerns? They are programmatic, policy, ethical.

On Programme Networks

In Wolfgang's view, "Their achievements (Networks) and performance have not been impressive; networks are not sustainable, their visibility is strongly relying on the secretariat's pushes......" It is true that the activities of the Networks were being orchestrated from the Nairobi secretariat given its propensity for centralization and command. DVV had a moral responsibility and professional duty to comment on the performance of AALAE's Networks and to express concern on how their tax payers' money was being used; DVV was paying for the Networks and other AALAE programmes. In any case, Leumer was saying what everybody knew. Even the secretary general concurred later that:

> *The weakest point [of AALAE] continues to be the Networks. Networks have not worked mainly because of what [is] called the "sin at inception"; namely, formation from the top. The second most important handicap to Networks has been part-time coordination as well as lack of infrastructure, and logistical and material base.*[16]

Although DVV and others provided adequate funding for Network Programmes, the funds were never used for Network activites. They went into the grey programmes such as *Mpambo*. One Network Coordinator lamented that getting funds for Network activities (from AALAE) was like getting gold bars from Fort Knox.

The concept of Networks and Networking generated a good deal of debate in AALAE. Networks were popular because they provided thematic space for the membership. The AALAE Evaluation found out that "The Networks Programme is supported by the majority [of members] for retention". But to make them efficient the Evaluation Report recommended that the AALAE Networks be reduced to four by merging the existing ones. The following mergers were recommended:

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- Environment and Community Education Network
- Literacy Education and Artists Network
- Gender Issues Network
- Participatory Research and University Network

A fifth new Network, Adult and Continuing Education Network, was recommended for creation. But before the recommendations were discussed by the Executive Council and the membership the secretary general took unilateral action to scrap the Networks. The programme officers were not even consulted before the Networks were jettisoned.

The Evaluation Process

The 1994 Evaluation of AALAE was an internal management tool. Coming a decade after the founding of the Association it was considered timely because of the opportunity it presented to the membership for retrospection and introspection in determining the way forward.

The Evaluation was conceptualised to be a participatory exercise in which the members could play a central and leading role. To this end, a team of four members was constituted; three of them were University lecturers and one, the team leader, was the coordinator of an action research grassroots organisation in Ghana. The team wasted no time in meeting to discuss and agree on the process of the evaluation, and to design the evaluation instruments. That meeting took place in Mombasa, Kenya. But before the team could get its act together it was disbanded by the secretary general who, it was believed, feared that he would not be in control of the process. His apparent distrust for professionals and University-based adult educators could have been a factor in his decision to disband the group. He later appointed a Ugandan colleague as the sole evaluator. Although this was seen as a strategy to control the process, the respect which many AALAE members had for the evaluator assuaged their fears.

However, in order to keep the participatory process on course it was suggested and agreed that a task force of key AALAE members would receive and study the report, and recommend programmes for the next three years - 1995 to 1997. A programme for that meeting was prepared and a lot of time and effort went into its organisation. Letters of invitation were faxed to the prospective participants, confirmations were received, tickets were sent by air courier, the documentation for the meeting was prepared, hotel reservations were made and transport arrangements finalized. Everything had been done for what was expected to be an important meeting of the membership. Two days before the first arrivals a telephone message was received from the secretary general, who was somewhere outside Kenya, to the effect that the meeting should be called off. The secretariat staff member who received the telephone call thought that the cancellation was another demonstration of the secretary general's "good sense of humour". Innocently, and in disbelief, she asked "are you joking?" The reply was "this is not for discussion; it is for implementation. I shall explain on my return".

The order meant immediate cancellation of the meeting - flight reservations, venue, hotel accomodation etc. It was messy. Faxes were sent to all those who had been invited; some who could not be reached by fax but were on telephone were reached with great difficulty given the vagaries of the system of communication in Africa. But inspite of the efforts to reach everyone, two people arrived for the meeting; on arrival they were surprised to learn that the meeting had been called off, and said that they never received the message for the meeting's cancellation. But even if they received the message, with a ticket in hand and all arrangements finalised to travel, only the unadventurous would not have dared to come. So the meeting was called off at great cost to the Association.

The secretary general arrived two weeks later and never explained why he ordered the meeting cancelled. In the absence of an explanation there was speculation that "the honeymoon abroad was too exciting and it would have been excruciating to abandon it for a mere meeting of the membership to receive an evaluation report".

The Problems of AALAE: As the Members Saw Them

Following is a summary of the problems which the membership identified with regard to the programmes of AALAE, as reported in the Evaluation Report: "scattered programmes; over-ambitious plans; top-down programme design and implementation; lack of programme focus; objectives too broad and not focused; functioning of Networks leaves a lot to be desired."

Lack of emphasis on literacy

Without illiteracy on the African continent AALAE would have been out of business even before registration. But ironically adult literacy got lost in AALAE's policies and programmes. Members and observers have been concerned that AALAE has abandoned its literacy objective. The Inter-Church Coordinating Committee for Development (ICCO), for example, discontinued funding of AALAE because, according to reliable sources, AALAE "did not have a literacy programme". It was widely believed that what AALAE was doing in the name of literacy was not literacy related. It had become increasingly difficult to draw a line between adult literacy and Wangoola's politics. The secretary general had himself asked:

> *What is the line between "literacy" and "politics" between "adult education" and "politics?" When do we do one and not the other? When do we do them together?*

The fact that the secretary general is a politician has led many to believe that he was only waiting for the political storm to subside before venturing into mainstream politics in Uganda from where he had fled into exile in 1982.

There seems to be a consensus that education, and adult education in particular cannot be politically neutral given the environment in which adult education is operationalised. But to use adult education and AALAE for that matter, for personal and selfish political gain is totally objectionable, unprofessional, unethical and downright fraudulent.

During the formation of the Literacy Network, it had been hoped that the Network would stimulate interest in literacy and provide space for adult literacy enthusiasts and professionals to pull their resources and deploy their tools and skills in contributing to solving the monumental literacy problem in Africa. But the Literacy Network, like the other AALAE Networks, suffered from the perennial problem of "lack of resources" and centralised decision making. Programme Officers and members of the secretariat staff were concerned by the deliberate starving of Networks of programme funds which everybody knew the donors had provided. Non-remittance of funds to the Networks was seen as a move to frustrate the efforts of the Coordinators many of whom were demonstrating their thematic expertise and capacity. Some were frustrated to resignation.

Leumer's statement therefore that "some literacy networkers told us that even modest requests to receive US $ 5,000 for token honorarium, paper, typewriter, postal and telecommunication bills were not honoured by AALAE", was honest and correct.[17]

Financial transactions in the AALAE secretariat was monkey business which was shrouded in secrecy. Misuse of money has been the biggest problem in the AALAE secretariat.

Policy

The minutes of the meetings of the AALAE Executive Council evidence a glaring lack of debate on policy matters. Policy articulation and determination seemed to be the preserve of the secretary general who once "complained" to the author that the members of the Executive Council did not have the intellectual capacity to discuss policy; many of them, he contended, did not even read the papers which he prepared.

The proposal for decentralization is an example of a policy issue which has not been debated. Papers on the issue have been written by Paul Wangoola and the author.[18] The major thrust of the proposals for decentralisation was the establishment of sub-regional offices as a strategy to take AALAE to the membership and have them own and control their organisation. But as the proposals were being made, the secretary general argued in favour of centralization because decentralization would lead to disintegration of the organisation. He argued that the members were weak and were not ready for dcentralization. One would have thought however, that the weakness of the membership would have been the major reason for decentralization to enable them strengthen themselves with the secretariat's technical and financial support. Yet the secretary general asked "are the national associations dynamic enough to continue to be principal members of AALAE?"

There has been a tendency to equate AALAE not with the movement but with the secretariat. "While the secretariat is strong, democratic, participatory and playing a leading role in the movement, the membership appears weak."

"Decentralisation is not fragmentation or dissipation. How do we decentralise while maintaining a pan-African outlook and unity".[19]

The issue of decentralisation was taken up during the evaluation and the report presents the views for and against decentralisation. As a way of decentralizing, it has been proposed by several members that AALAE should establish sub-regional offices to be closer to the members. On the other hand, given the stringent financial situation that AALAE is currently in, opening up new offices may not reflect the financial prudence which is and will remain critical to the success of the organisation.[20]

In addition to the weakness of the membership a financial argument has entered the debate on decentralization. The "stringent financial situation" is, one would think, a more compelling reason why the members must take charge of their organisation and mobilise resources locally to support their own programmes. Even with the good times when AALAE did not have a financial problem the members did not receive financial support. The Networks, for example were starved to death. Put another way centralization is the major reason why AALAE is in a "stringent financial situation". Members do not know how programme funds running to the millions of dollars have been spent.

The recommendation of the AALAE secretariat was towards further centralization. It says. "For a continental NGO, AALAE's secretariat staffing strength is not adequate. Infact, as matters stand now the secretariat is understaffed."

It recommended an increase in the secretariat staff to "reflect Africa's national, cultural and linguistic diversity as well as gender balance". It is interesting to note that this recommendation was coming less than one year after five members of staff had been laid off due to a "financial" crisis.

The report further recommended that the secretariat staff should be drawn from North Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and the Islands. "At least five programme officers should be recruited to coordinate field programmes", from the secretariat in Nairobi. The five would be in addition

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to the secretary general, two programme officers, finance and administration officer, information coordinator and junior staff. What a top heavy bureaucracy the secretariat would be!

In making the above recommendation the report does not obscure the fact that, "at present the secretariat handles all the publications, fund raising, coordination of programmes, networks, and programme design". It lamented the fact that there is little or no delegation of duties to national associations and grassroots organisations.

It had become apparent in AALAE circles that the secretary general was an unwilling supporter of decentralization. His commanding style of rule was at variance with the principles and practice of decentralization. The saga of the ICAE Women Network Programme in the author's view, is a clear evidence of his penchant and deep passion for centralization and dictatorial rule.

Political (power), ideological and selfish interests are the bedrock of a strong passion for command and arguments that decentralization will not be in the interest of the unity and integrity of AALAE. The secretary general's arguments were contrived to goad the membership into believing that decentralization will lead to fragmentation. The images of the "external enemy" were invoked to warn the members of AALAE about the forces at work to divide the African people. The secretary general says that, "as the North intensifies its conquest of the African peoples they will try to divide AALAE and to cut the leadership off from the people". Those who were pushing for decentralization were therefore committing a sin against the African peoples.

What the Donors and Partners said

To many - AALAE members, donors, partners, and observers - the current crisis was not unexpected. It was only a matter of time before the Nairobi secretariat crumbled under the weight of its own contradictions. The message was clearly written on the wall.

Systematic marginalization and alienation of the membership, especially members who were seen to be objectively critical, irregular meetings of the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee, blatant disregard for the constitution, concentration of power in the Nairobi secretariat, glaring lack of checks and balances in the conduct of programme and financial affairs, and administrative mismanagement are some of the immediate causes of the collapse of AALAE.

For a long time, donors and partners who provided the bulk of AALAE's funds have been sounding the alarm bells. The first to terminate funding was ICCO. They argued that since AALAE was not doing literacy work it was pointless to continue funding a non-existent literacy programme. For the secretary general

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ICCO's withdrawal was good riddance. "Who are they to tell us what to do?" he quipped when information on ICCO's decision not to continue funding AALAE was received. Next was the German Adult Education Association (DVV) whose global support for literacy and adult education is well known. DVV had been overly critical of AALAE's preoccuption with the larger global political issues and diminishing interest in mundane and real-life issues of the education of illiterate Africans.

DVV does not see itself as a donor but a professional organisation with interests beyond the provision of funds. Their position on the literacy debate for example, is well known. They have unashamedly made it abundantly clear that theirs is a partnership founded on professional commitment to adult education and would resist being seen as a donor.

The secretary general would hear nothing about professionalism. He once asked contemptuously during a discussion with the author, "who is a professional?" As far as he was concerned the word professional does not exist. So DVV and AALAE's secretary general found themselves at opposing ends of the adult education divide. Consequently anything which DVV said, which smacked of professionalism, was resisted with iron fist plated resolve.

Many AALAE members did not see a DVV - AALAE divide because it never existed. What they saw was a DVV - Paul Wangoola problem which should have been sorted out without drawing AALAE as an organisation into it. DVV's relationship with AALAE members was cordial in a number of countries where DVV had field offices. Even at a personal level, DVV staff had many friends and an excellent professional relationship with African adult educators many of whom applauded DVV for stating what they would not say even at the level of the Executive Council where the secretary general's edicts were approved with an unclear conscience.

The donors and partners' concerns focused on issues that were, in general programmatic, organisational, and financial. AALAE's programmes and structure came under the spotlight.

Programme Concerns

What role should AALAE as a regional adult education organisation play?

What is the role of the secretariat?

What is the role of the membership in programme determination and implementation?

Is AALAE having an impact in Africa's quest for development?

These concerns were borne of the fact that AALAE's rhetoric was out of touch with the reality on the ground. The Nairobi secretariat had become the membership and was the one determining, implementing and evaluating programmes. The participation of "the members" was solicited only to give

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legitimacy to the secretariat's, and by extension, the secretary general's actions. A lot was said and written about participation but there was little or no participation. Those who were invited to meetings, workshops etc were handpicked and not the nominees of their organisations. In fact many of the participants did not have a constituency. Consequently, after the meetings, nothing could happen by way of implementation of decisions and proposals.

Following are some of the concerns expressed by donors and partners in terms of AALAE programmes:

> *"AALAE's programme seemed too ambitious in scope. The Board questioned the delivery capacity and sustainability of such a programme, particularly in these difficult financial times and given the AALAE deficit situation".*
>
> *"The gender and development component needs strengthening. It was noted that an earlier programme draft which included a section on "gender, youth, culture and the African family" was subsequently dropped".*
>
> *"We wonder why environmental and gender education seems to have disappeared from AALAE's agenda for 1995 - 1997".*[21]

The gender, youth, culture and the African family programme had metamorphosed into the *Mpambo* initiative in Bulawayo. Since Bulawayo, millions of shillings have been spent developing the idea into a programme in Jinja, Uganda. This was done at the expense of the legitimate programmes for which funds had been provided.

> *"Looking towards 1994 and beyond, we would like to inform you that NORAD will not be in a position to grant core funding. NORAD will, however consider contributing to specific training and institutional development projects aimed at competence building in the Eastern and Southern region of Africa within the concept of Networks Development Programme."*

NORAD did not only identify the programme areas in which they were interested, they also identified the following countries "of special relevance to NORAD" Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda. But with the scrapping of Networks and by extension termination of network programme it was unclear how NORAD funds were to be used. As expected the funds were misappropriated and got "lost" in grey programmes.

The secretary general was suspicious of the donors' and partners' support for the Networks. Support, especially financial support was seen as a way of fragmenting the Association given the desire for autonomy by the Networks. He was particularly unhappy with DVV whom he repeatedly accused of being hegemonic. In a "policy paper" which he presented to the Executive Council in Bauchi, Nigeria in 1992, he says:

> *The DVV policy and programme in Africa is clear and well-documented. For the last 15 years or so DVV has been on a programme to impose its hegemony on the African continent, at the level of adult education. The DVV has waged battles with AALAE, as its objective cannot be achieved while AALAE remains the voice of African adult educators.*

Vox Populi Vox Dei! That was definitely not the voice of the AALAE people. It was Wangoola's voice which never represented the people; if there was anything his voice did, it was to alienate and marginalise the people.

Organizational Concerns

Ought a regional Association to act in a more centralized way when its members tend to be weak? In other words, is decentralization solely possible when there are strong members?

Donors and partners were becoming increasingly concerned that the AALAE secretariat had become the membership in the absence of "strong members". One would have expected that the weakness of members was justification for focusing attention on them because without the members one can hardly talk of AALAE and in view of the fact that the Nairobi secretariat is just a facilitating tool.

The process of alienating, marginalizing and further weakening of the membership was part of a grand scheme to dismantle the Association and create space for the emergence of *Mpambo*. This scheme which is now very clear is the cause of the current crisis.

Financial Concerns

Lack of accountability has been a perennial problem in the AALAE secretariat and a major bone of contention between AALAE and her donors and partners. Agreements of Cooperation signed between AALAE and all the donors and partners formed the basis for programme cooperation. The Agreements provide for both programme and financial reporting. AALAE's notoriety for flouting the terms of the Agreements, as far as financial reporting is concerned, was a serious cause for concern. Donors and partners had to virtually beg for financial reports several months after they were due. "More than 70% of AALAE's correspondence with donors and partners concern the issue of reporting".[illegible] The following are indications of the concerns.

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> *"However, as time is passing, it would also be convenient to have a report on activities during 1994 and a financial report for the same period. Certainly it would strengthen your case if such reports are available".*[23]
>
> *"The narrative report was sent in June 1995. According to the Agreement with NORAD the report should have been submitted by March 31, 1995."*

Eighty percent of CIDA's correspendence with AALAE consisted of requests for reports. Even the OAU was loud in demanding a financial report for US $ 10,000 sent to AALAE in 1994, and which was still awaited by November, 1995.

One reason why financial reports are not submitted on time or not at all is that funds received for specific activities are never spent on those activities. It therefore becomes impossible to report especially when the reporting format leaves little or no room for manoeuvre and falsification. For example some formats include list of participants, detailed cost of the activities and an analysis of income and expenditure.

The other reason for late submission of reports, or not submitting at all is absenteeism of the secretary general from the secretariat. The secretary general spends upto 80% of the time "on missions" or on other "official matters" abroad. Of the remaining twenty percent, ninety percent is spent "working at home" in Kenya or Uganda. With very little or no time at the secretariat, matters of importance are not attended to on time. What is more, all correspondence of a "sensitive nature" must receive the attention of the secretary general even if that meant attending to them six months after they were received.

The secretary general's absence from the secretariat contributed to AALAE losing about US $ 600,000 for the Expanded Technical Assistance Project (ETAP). In June 1994 Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) which had funded the Technical Assistance Project (TAP) to the tune of US $ 500,000 sent communication to all partners including AALAE requesting submission of project proposals (Ref. PAC memo of June 22, 1994). The deadline for the first submission of project proposals was August 12, 1994 for review in September, 1994. The deadline for the second submission was January 13, 1995 for review in March, 1995. AALAE's proposal which had been prepared by the author who was then the Technical Assistance Project Coordinator several months before the submission deadline and which was on the desk crying for the attention of the secretary general was submitted on October 5, 1994. When the proposal was received the PAC Board deferred action on it because there was no budget. In a memo dated December 15, 1994 the Executive Director of PAC said that "it was a bit difficult reviewing your proposal without an accompanying budget". They also wanted a number of issues clarified. By the time the clarification and budget were sent the funding programme of PAC had been terminated by the Canadian Government. African partners who respected the PAC's timelines (e.g. MWENGO and FAVDO) received funds. AALAE's procrastination caused by the absenteeism of the secretary general cost her some US $ 600,000.

But in "a statement on the programme and financial situation at AALAE" the secretary general explains the reason for the loss of US $ 600,000:

> ***During the month of April, 1995 the government of Canada withdrew from Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) the mandate to fund African NGOs. This was done without warning and while PAC still had our request on their lap. PAC had given strong indication that they would renew our cooperation for another 3 years, with financial contribution of about $ 200,000 per year.***[24]

The finance officer who should have prepared the budget also spent long periods out of the secretariat. It was rumoured that most of his time was spent in Uganda- either supervising the construction of houses or attending to matters relating to a reconditioned-car importation business. Ugandans who are members of AALAE had often wondered how the finance officer and the secretary general were running the secretariat when they spent most of their time in Uganda.

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They shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into prunning hooks

The Bible

5

THE DRAMA UNFOLDS

The drama, carefully written and rehearsed, would have been staged in Khartoum in October 1995, had the Third General Assembly taken place. Khartoum would have marked the end of AALAE as a regional literacy and adult education organisation.

Setting the Stage

The plot to dismantle AALAE had a number of sub plots which have been staged. These included the following:

- Rubbishing of the AALAE Constitution;
- Keeping the constitutional organs at bay;
- Ruling by 'decree';
- Marginalization of the membership;
- Deriding professionals and professionalism;
- Building and consolidating external power bases;
- Building a new organisation i.e. *Mpambo*;
- Compromising the chairman of AALAE;
- Scrapping of mainstream programmes and replacing them with grey programmes;
- Sacking of secretariat staff;
- Misuse of programme funds;
- Misuse of other resources of AALAE including staff members;
- Hurling abuses at donors;
- Election of the secretary general to the Boards of a number of regional and international organisations. FEMNET, FAVDO, ELCI, PAC, CIVICUS.

The Curtain Raiser

In preparation for the Third General Assembly which was scheduled for October 1995, in Khartoum, a Nairobi-based planning committee had been working round the clock to organise the Assembly over 1995 and between January and September 1996. The author visited Khartoum to meet with the Khartoum-based planning committee and to inspect the facilities that would have been made available for the Assembly. By the end of September 1995, everything was in place except the membership of AALAE. Since the General Assembly was being organised on self-reliance, meaning that participants would pay for their travel, it was not certain how many members would attend and without the membership, the General Assembly could not be held. The Constitution provides that:

> *"The quorum for any General Assembly including extra-ordinary ones, shall constitute at least one half of the Executive Council; at least half of the number of member National Associations, with at least 5% of the registered membership or, forty individual, life, and institutional members."* (Article VIII. 8).

Given the prohibitive cost of air travel and the unhealthy economic conditions prevailing in many African countries it was uncertain whether the members would attend given that the request for the members to pay their way to the venue for the Assembly was a departure from past practice. For the 1987 and 1990 General Assemblies AALAE met the full cost of the participation of the members, majority of whom expected AALAE to do the same in 1995. There was no tradition of the membership paying for their participation in any AALAE activity. The self-reliance criterion was therefore not well received. What was more, the members knew that the donors and partners had provided funds which had not been used for programmes at least not for those in which they had participated because they were not invited by AALAE to participate. Consequently, they had adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Would the Assembly go on without the membership?

The Chairman of AALAE will go to Khartoum with or without the Membership.

The secretary general had said that with or without the membership the Chairman of AALAE would go to Khartoum and "make a decision". That decision would be to constitute a transformation committee which would have marked the end of AALAE as presently organised. That would have been the final act in hijacking the Association and its transformation into the *Mpambo* enterprise.

The *Mpambo* Predator

Since the strange emergence of *Mpambo* from the Bulawayo meeting, there had been a flurry of activity to transform the *Mpambo* idea into a for-profit business organisation on the ground. That was clandestinely done under the aegis of AALAE and with the use of programme funds amounting to millions of Kenya shillings. Meetings in Kenya and Uganda were organised to prepare documentation and for overseas travel to 'sell' the idea and fundraise. We all participated in the development of the idea because without the hidden private profit agenda it seemed an exciting concept.

What is *Mpambo*?

This was the question which the members of the Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) tried to address at a meeting held on Tuesday 31st October, 1995 at the Sagret Hotel Board Room in Nairobi. That meeting was convened to deliberate on the critical financial situation of AALAE which had necessitated postponement of the Third General Assembly.

The earlier documentation had described *Mpambo* as The African Multivarsity, which was to be headquartered in Jinja, Busoga Province, Uganda. It was not 'an AALAE project although it had strangely emerged' out of an AALAE activity. The Women Network meeting in Bulawayo had given birth to a project which was to be implemented in Jinja by the secretary general.

At the SAC meeting the discussion of *Mpambo* came under the agenda item "Mission Report: Tehran and Khartoum". The secretary general had visited Tehran and Khartoum to, among other things, discuss the *Mpambo* business. He visited Tehran, Iran from 1st to 5th October, 1995 where he had met Dr. Abdalla Suliman the chair of the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA). The Mission Report states:

After discussions stretching over a period of three days, it was agreed as follows:

1. Strategic Business Partnership: AALAE, IARA and *Mpambo* would team up to initiate a multinational business enterprise to generate funds for the organisations' charitable work.

   Dr. Suliman will present to his Board on 24th October, 1995 this proposal for a strategic business partnership. He is confident his proposal will be supported. Thereafter, AALAE, IARA and *Mpambo* should set up a technical committee to work out business plans and make recommendations to a joint policy-making committee.

2. Survival and Restructuring of AALAE: IARA will make financial contribution to AALAE to support her efforts to restructure herself to a new level of sustainability. The chairman took note of the secretary general's request for $ 100,000, but the actual amount will be determined by the IARA Board

scheduled to meet on 24th October.

3. Strategic Network: The three organisations will work together to initiate the formation of a pan-African Network to bring together organisations and individuals who believe in the African people and their capacity to solve their problems in unity and solidarity. To this Network AALAE and *Mpambo* would bring Africanism, while IARA would bring the Islamic anti-Western/Northern domination.[25]

The following should be noted: First, the secretary general was representing both AALAE and *Mpambo*. Second, he did not have the mandate to involve AALAE into a business partnership. Third, AALAE was moving away from development through literacy and adult education into charitable work. Fourth, the secretary general's request for a loan of $ 100,000 did not have the approval of the AALAE Executive Committee. Fifth, whilst the chairman of the Board of IARA in the view of the author, was disciplined and cultured to take Wangoola's request to his Board, Wangoola was so indisciplined and uncultured as to negotiate on a far-reaching matter, on behalf of AALAE, without the mandate of his Executive Committee. Except for the chairman of AALAE, none of the members of the AALAE Executive Council had ever heard of *Mpambo*. Sixth, AALAE was being transformed from a non-profit organisation to a profit organisation without the mandate of the General Assembly and without regard for the Laws of Kenya under which it was registered as a non-profit organisation. Seventh, *Mpambo* had become one of the three organisations.

The Non-Governmental Organisations Coordination Act, 1990 which gives AALAE the legal mandate to operate in Kenya states:

> "Non-Governmental Organisation" means a private voluntary grouping of individuals or associations, not operated for profit of for other commercial purposes[26]

AALAE's objectives as stated in the Constitution are not in the area of buying and selling of goods for profit. The Constitution clearly states that:

The Objectives of the Association shall be:

1. to promote literacy and adult education;
2. to increase understanding of the people and governments of Africa by focussing on the relationship between literacy, adult, continuing and vocational education on the one hand and development on the other;
3. to encourage the development and implementation of relevant adult, continuing, vocational and literacy education in Africa.[27]

The secretary general's actions were not only in violation of the NGO Act and the Constitution of AALAE, but also in gross violation of Non-Governmental Organisations Council Code of Conduct of 1995 which states that:

> *"In the performance of its functions, every registered organisation shall at all times avoid any conflict between official and private interests."*

At the SAC meeting of October 31 1995, the members were surprised to learn that the secretary general was representing AALAE and *Mpambo* and that he had gone ahead to negotiate AALAE out of existence - that was the implication of Tehran. After he had presented his Mission Report, two questions were asked: "Who is establishing links with who?" "Who or what is *Mpambo*?"

In reply the secretary general said that:

> *Mpambo is an idea; the consequence of discussions on the need for new development ideas/initiatives in the early 1990s. The Mpambo idea is in line with the need for organisational genetic diversity. When Mpambo becomes an organisation it will co-exist with AALAE.*[28]

This response elicited further questions:

Will *Mpambo* become a subsidiary of AALAE?

If we are going into a business partnership do we go as AALAE?

What are the legal implications?

What is the mandate?

What are the structural implications?

Who represents AALAE?

Is the secretary general representing AALAE or *Mpambo*?

The meeting felt that if there should be a business partnership it should be between AALAE and IARA and that the relationship between AALAE and IARA should be clearly defined. The meeting was warned of the dangers AALAE was in as a result of the secretary general's machinations and manipulation. It was clear that *Mpambo* posed a serious threat to the existence of AALAE and was a significant step towards the demise of AALAE.

The meeting was informed by the author that *Mpambo* was not a person in law and could not therefore negotiate a business partnership. What was more, the issue of business had legal, moral and programmatic implications given AALAE's fundamental objective in literacy and adult education. Converting AALAE into a business organisation was beyond the competence and legal authority of the Secretariat Advisory Committee to discuss. It was a matter for the General Assembly.

The plot which had been hatched was becoming apparent. It was believed that, if the General Assembly had gone ahead without the members of AALAE, the chairman would have illegally transformed AALAE into a business with the constitution of a transformation committee which would have replaced the Executive Council. AALAE would have met her death in Khartoum.

Khartoum: To go or not to go? That was the question

Having realised that the secretary general, in his desperation for profit, was taking AALAE down the ravine with the connivance of the chairman and other members of the SAC, it was felt that time was ripe to confront the secretary general on the issue. This was a moral obligation because the AALAE secretariat staff were collectively and individually responsible for the life or death of the Association. What was more, they had legal responsibility to ensure that AALAE was managed in accordance with the Laws of Kenya and the Constitution of AALAE. They were convinced that whatever the consequences of their actions everything had to be done to open the pandora's box and remove all the skeletons from the closet.

The Parting of Ways

The Chairman's Consultative Meeting

In the run up to the Third General Assembly in Khartoum, Sudan, slated for 21st to 24th October, 1995 the chairman of AALAE convened a consultative meeting in Nairobi from 7th to 8th October. The purpose of the meeting was to advise the chairman on how to proceed to Khartoum. According to the chairman the meeting was neither a meeting of the SAC nor of the Executive Council. The decision on whom to invite was therefore solely his.

It should be pointed out that before that meeting the secretary general had made several shuttle visits, over eight in three months to Kampala, where the chairman was resident to consult on AALAE. It was on his return from one of those visits that he declared that, with or without the membership in Khartoum, the chairman would make a decision. It was apparent therefore, that the chairman wanted support to implement the decisions which he and the secretary general had agreed on, and the meeting was meant to be a rubber stamp as many SAC and Executive Council meetings had been in the past.

The following were invited to the consultative meeting:

Dr. Juma Nyirenda, vice chairman of AALAE

John Kananda, treasurer of ICAE, member of SAC, member of the Board of Trustees, financial advisor to the secretary general and signatory to AALAE's eleven or more accounts in the U.S., Europe and Africa.

Jeconia Odumbe, member of SAC

James Githongo, finance and administration officer of AALAE

Alaoy, programme officer

J.D. Ekundayo Thompson, programme officer.

The treasurer of AALAE, Mrs Mary Opiyo, was not invited ostensibly because she had been critical of the secretary general's mismanagement of the affairs of AALAE especially in the area of finance.

Following was the Agenda for the meeting

1. Courtesies
2. Status and purpose of the meeting
3. Overview of the global situation
4. Financial report
5. The Third General Assembly.

The chairman thanked members for accepting his invitation to the meeting and gave a justification for convening the meeting. His explanation was followed by a presentation on "the global situation" by the secretary general. In his presentation the secretary general reviewed the history of AALAE which was born from the merger between the African Adult Education Association (AAEA) and the Afrolit Society. He explained that with the merger of the AAEA and Afrolit Society in 1984, the members of both organisations automatically became members of AALAE. He said that the predecessors of AALAE were formed during the cold war which was characterised by tensions between the East and the West, and that, the situation of East-West tension existed when the merger between AAEA and Afrolit took place in 1984. He said that AALAE benefited from development aid which was an instrument of the East-West rivalry. Aid was used by the East and the West to expand their spheres of influence. When the Berlin wall was brought down in 1989, the event triggered a revolution in Eastern Europe which marked the victory of the West over the East and by extension the end of the cold war. He said that the end of the cold war had resulted in dramatic global, political, and economic changes including changes in foreign policy, development thinking, foregn aid, involvement of donors in development work at the grassroots and changes in foreign policy orientation. Consequently, AALAE, like many other regional and global networks found herself with less money to accomplish the programme objectives in literacy and adult education. This, he said, was the major cause of the current financial crisis.

The exposition by the secretary general said nothing new. He had talked about the global situation times without number in various fora including meetings of the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee. The members wanted nothing more of his schemes and were uneasy due to the fact that time was being wasted on rhetoric. The members thought that the fourth item on the agenda was the most important to discuss because the reality was that if the Third General Assembly was to go on, money was needed. A discussion of AALAE's financial situation was demanded.

The following questions were asked in the discussion which ensued:

Is AALAE aware that changes are taking place?

Is AALAE responding to the changes?

If 'Yes' how?

Is the response adequate? Would it justify AALAE's existence?

Can AALAE reach the grassroots?

If 'yes' how?

Are the members of AALAE supportive of the efforts of the secretariat to grapple with and respond to the changes?

What is the financial situation of AALAE?

The following consensus emerged from the discussion:

> *There is a contradiction between the internal mode of operation in AALAE and the external changes which are taking place.*
>
> *The links between the membership of AALAE and the secretariat are tenuous. The majority of the members have a feeling of alienation.*
>
> *The members of AALAE have their own internal problems which preoccupy them - lack of funds, lack of qualified and experienced personnel, lack of voluntarism.*
>
> *The effects of the changing global situation are understood in general but specifically what are the reasons for the secretariat's inability to implement aspects of the Three - Year Programme (1995 - 1997) for which funds have been provided by the donors and partners?*

There was further consensus that

> *everything should not be blamed on the global situation. We should look within ourselves for the root causes of the problems which constitute the current crisis.*

The secretary general was visibly surprised at the tone of the meeting and at the questions which were being raised. During his thirteen years at the helm no meeting had ever addressed itself to serious issues. Past meetings had merely rubber stamped his proposals contained in "papers" which were hardly read.

It was clear that the presence of Alaoy and J.D. Thompson had brought some dynamics into the meeting. It was reported later that, he regretted ever inviting the two.

From the Global Situation to the Financial Situation of AALAE

Before the presentation of the financial situation the secretary general informed the meeting that AALAE faced a serious financial crisis, and that the Association was technically insolvent. He said that the Association could not meet its financial commitments including payment of salaries.

A handwritten statement of income and expenditure for the period January to September, 1995 was presented by the finance and administration officer. The statement showed an expenditure of US $ 288,619 and a deficit of US $ 23,466. The expenditure included US $ 55,802 in respect of the Learners' Empowerment Programme. The two programme officers, Alaoy and J.D. Thompson, were at a loss to understand why that amount of money had been spent when no activity had taken place. Alaoy in particular wanted to know what US $ 55,802 had been spent on because as the coordinator of the Learners' Empowerment Programme he was unaware of the expenditure. Before the meeting the finance and administration officer had invited Alaoy to his office and had requested him to acquiesce to the expenditure in respect of his programme. Alaoy flatly refused to do this and requested that the matter be discussed openly in the meeting.

The handwritten financial report triggered off a spirited debate on the financial situation of AALAE in particular and financial management in general. The meeting felt that the statement of income and expenditure was inadequate because there was no indication of the closing balance as at December 1994, and the opening balance as at January 1995. Members also wanted to know what the previous year's financial situation was. The finance and administration officer was therefore, requested to present to the meeting the audited statements of Accounts for 1992, 1993 and 1994.

When the audited statements of accounts were presented members were shocked to learn that AALAE had been running a deficit since 1992, and that it was increasing every year. Following are the statements of income and expenditure:

Amounts in Kenya Shillings KSh 45 = US $ 1

Year	*Income*	*Expenditure*	*Deficit*
1992	30,652,869	31,373,079	720,210
1993	43,218,343	44,150,723	932,380

1994	31,843,784	33,444,015	1,600,231
1995	20,348,09	25,054,134	4,706,043

Source: Deloitte and Touche Reports and Accounts for 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995.

The secretary general informed the meeting that action was taken in 1993 to reduce the deficit through staff reduction. Although five members of staff were laid off in 1993 the deficit continued to increase. According to the Treasurer of AALAE "staff laid off by the EXCO as a crisis measure came back on the payroll purportedly as consultants".[29]

Recognising the gravity of the financial ill health of AALAE the meeting suggested a number of measures which should be taken to ameliorate the financial problem; these included:

- Further staff reduction
- Fundraising
- Implementation of priority programmes
- Marketing and sale of professional services

The finance and administration officer offered to leave and to continue to provide voluntary service "on a part-time basis". The meeting rejected the offer of the finance officer to work voluntarily on a "part-time basis". The offer was rejected on the ground that since the relationship between the finance officer and AALAE was a formal one it was improper for the finance officer to determine what to do, when and how. Nine months later in June 1996 the finance officer was still offering to leave.[30]

The Third General Assembly

The meeting noted that there was no guarantee that a quorum would be realised for business to be transacted in accordance with the constitution. The debate which ensued on whether to go to Khartoum or not was based on arguments and considerations that were in general constitutional, financial and ethical.

Constitutional

It was irresponsible to go ahead with the General Assembly when it was known that the meeting would be inchoate. The members of AALAE had not indicated that they would attend. They were expected to meet the cost of air travel because the General Assembly was being organised on the basis of self-reliance.

Financial

AALAE was insolvent, so the meeting was told. It was therefore unwise to use the little money that was in the kitty to fly to Khartoum for a meeting that would not hold.

Ethical

It was unethical for a few people including the chairman of AALAE and the secretary general to proceed to Khartoum without the members of the Executive Council for a meeting that would not realise a quorum for business to be transacted.

References/Chap 5

25. AALAE, Secretary General's Mission to Tehran, IRAN, 1st - 5th October, 1995.
26. Government Printer. The Non-Governmental Organisations Co-ordination Act, 1990. Kenya Gazette Supplement Acts, 1991, Nairobi, 18th January, 1991, pp. 8 - 22.
27. AALAE, The Constitution p.1 Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 59, legal Notice No. 306 of 8th September, 1995. The Non-Governmental Organisations Co-ordination Act)NO. 19 of 1990) p. 798.
28. AALAE, minutes of the meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE), held on Tuesday 31st October at the Sagret Hotel Board Room.
29. Opiyo, M.B.A. Letter of Resignation as AALAE Treasurer and member of S.A.C.
30. A statement on Urgent Issues on the Affairs of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE), p. 3.

It is wonderful how much dignity and authority departs with one's clothing

Oclive Fletcher

6

Against The Tide

Settling Scores

The author was one of those who had argued in support of the postponement of the General Assembly. By suggesting postponement he had committed a "sin" which warranted punishment. The secretary general was visibly angry at the suggestion that the General Assembly be postponed although by the end of the debate he also supported the idea of postponement. That was a tactical retreat.

Before the end of the meeting it was decided that the chairman would meet with the secretariat staff so that all staff contracts could be updated.

The Meeting that Never was

On Monday October 9, members of staff waited for the chairman with expectation. However, the meeting never took place because the chairman was presumably "very busy". If members of staff had met him they would have told him that the AALAE crisis was due to large-scale financial mismanagement and acts of corruption in the secretariat. But since he was "unable" to meet with them an opportunity for dialogue was lost. His departure from the secretariat, to catch his flight for Kampala, was swift and incommunicado.

There had been no previous opportunity to meet the chairman who, for the first time in nine years, did not live in a hotel. He was the guest of the secretary general who ensured that the chairman' s itinerary was such that there was no room to see anyone.

Walking the Tightrope

The chairman was flanked off by the secretary general who later called on Alaoy to express his outrage at Alaoy's support for the decision to postpone the General Assembly. He was particularly angered by J.D. Thompson whom he accused of disloyalty, and vowed to deal with him. Alaoy responded by telling the secretary general that it was in the interest of AALAE that the decision to postpone the Assembly was made.

The secretary general expressed his inability to continue to work with Thompson because of his questionable loyalty. He tried unsuccessful to enlist Alaoy's support for his scheme to eliminate Thompson. But when it seemed that the latter would not retreat from his position of rationality the secretary general left Alaoy's house in a huff at 2.00 a.m!

Meeting to Discuss the Crisis

On the 10th October, 1995(a public holiday in Kenya), Paul Wangoola, Alaoy, John Kananda and J.D. Thompson met to discuss the crisis and ways of exiting it. The meeting which was convened in response to what was described as an explosive situation, was characterised by candour. After a free, frank and principled discussion it was suggested and agreed as follows:

1. That Paul Wangoola would proceed on sabbatical leave with effect from 1st January, 1996. The AALAE Executive Council, at its meeting in Bauchi Nigeria, in 1992 had approved the secretary general's request for sabbatical leave.

   The following considerations informed the sabbatical leave decision:

   a) Paul Wangoola had not been on leave since he joined AALAE in 1982.

   b) He appeared physically exhausted and was burning out very fast. Consequently, it was thought that he needed time to recuperate.

   c) It was believed that it was impossible for Paul Wangoola to spearhead AALAE out of the crisis because he seemed to have lost credibility in the eyes of the AALAE donors, partners and members.

   d) It appeared that he was embroiled in perennial domestic palava which was sapping his physical and mental energies. What was more, a number of members of AALAE were concerned that AALAE's image had been battered by the sleaze factor which had made the secretariat object of ridicule. The sensual conduct of certain members of the secretariat had led friends of AALAE to believe that the Association was no longer engaged in adult education, but was engaged in 'adultry education' instead.

2. That Alaoy would act as secretary general in the absence of the incumbent.
3. That a meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee would be convened to consider the proposals to exit the crisis.
4. That J.D. Thompson would prepare a paper for presentation to the meeting of the 13th October.

5. That the quartet would meet on the 13th October to discuss J.D. Thompson's paper in preparation for the meeting of the SAC which was slated for the 15th but re-scheduled for the 18th October.[31]

The Meeting of the 13th October

J.D. Thompson's paper "Resolving the Funding Crisis: A Strategic Approach" was presented to the meeting. The paper examined the crisis and diagnosed its causes as well as suggested options to exit it. He suggested a process that would have culminated in a consultative members' forum which would have done an indepth analysis of the problems faced by AALAE and determine a new organisational profile.

On programmes he suggested that an interim programme that would justify the continued existence of the secretariat, and utilisation of financial resources already mobilised should be put in place. He proposed that the interim programme should include programmes for which the German Adult Education Association (DVV), the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) and the Swedish International Agency for Development Co-operation (SIDA) had provided financial support.

A process that would have led to the Third General Assembly and internal fundraising strategies was elaborated.

On administration, he suggested an interim administration that would have comprised of the following:

- acting secretary general
- programme officer
- information co-ordinator
- part-time accountant
- two office assistants

The paper was debated after which it was agreed that:

> *Under the leadership of Paul Wangoola as secretary general, it would be extremely difficult to resolve the crisis the organisation faced. For that matter therefore, it was necessary for the secretary general to step aside and allow for the Association to be reorganised to face and emerge out of the crisis.* (Minute 3.1)

Paul Wangoola informed the meeting that he was prepared to step aside in the interest of AALAE. He said that if he did not step aside AALAE would be divided and that, that division would serve no purpose. (Minute 3.1)

In his contribution to the debate, the finance officer said that Wangoola's decision to proceed on sabbatical leave was timely as it would bring about the unity of the membership. He however, warned that the secretary general's departure would provide space for his enemies to expose him.

At the end of the discussion it was agreed that:

> *The AALAE secretariat would be managed strategically. To that end, Paul Wangoola would proceed on sabbatical leave with effect from 1st January 1996. In his absence Alaoy would act as secretary general. It was also agreed that the secretariat administration would be rationalised for the purpose of efficiency, effectiveness and cost reduction.*[32]

It was further agreed that the recommendations would be presented to the Secretariat Advisory Committee which was slated to meet on 18th October to deliberate on the crisis. But between the 13th and 18th, the secretary general had changed his mind to proceed on leave because he wanted to preside over the crisis. It was reported, however, that the change of mind was on the advice of the finance officer who warned him that if he went on leave both of them would be exposed. The speculation was that there were too many skeletons in the cupboard. Consequently, at the meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee the secretary general reported that he would stay on.

The Meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee on Wednesday 18th October, 1996

The following Secretariat Advisory Committee and secretariat staff members attended the meeting.

Mr. David K. arap Kirui	Chairman of SAC and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
Mrs Mary Opiyo	Treasurer, AALAE
Mr. Jeconia Odumbe	Member of SAC
Mr. John Kananda	Member of SAC
Mr. Paul Wangoola	Secretary General
Mr. Alaoy	Programme Officer
Mr. Ekundayo J.D. Thompson	Programme Officer

The secretary general informed the meeting that he had been associated with the

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rise of AALAE and would not wish to be responsible for its decline. He emphasised the need to maintain the unity and integrity of AALAE. To that end, he outlined a process for the implementation of what he described as a “renewal programme” which would culminate in the General Assembly where he proposed to hand over and “proceed to undertake a new initiative which would be separate but linked to AALAE”.

This was a new strategy formulated to replace the sabbatical leave option. The move was greeted with the following reactions:

> *“The secretary general's exit is an honourable solution which would provide space for AALAE to be reorganised”.*

Ekundayo J D Thompson

> *“The exit option is wise but no miracles should be expected”.*

Alamy

> *“The crisis had always been there because of AALAE's dependency on external sources of funds. The crisis is occasioned by lack of money not lack of confidence or lack of a viable programme”.*

John Kananda

> *We are in a situation of history repeating itself. Afrolit experienced similar problems. After the merger of Afrolit and AAEA, AALAE experienced a crisis which was resolved by the departure of the former executive director. The decision of the secretary general to proceed on sabbatical leave is good and honourable. But we should consider survival strategies in terms of the following: An effective interim administration; A programme; A budget.*

Mary Opiyo

> *The solution to the crisis is purely internal. What about external solutions? What did the evaluation of AALAE recommend? Are there issues of management, finance and programme? If there are, the basic problem must be identified. Any solution we prescribe has got to be far-reaching. We need to diagnose the problem and analyse the root causes. Why is AALAE on the decline? Is the exit of the secretary general a viable solution? What problems is he moving out with? What obstacles is he leaving behind? Are we seeing the symptoms of the collapse of AALAE or has AALAE collapsed already? How come that AALAE has no money when funds for development are available? Has AALAE got money somewhere?*

Jeconiah Odumbe

> ***"We should diagnose and analyse the root causes of the problems of AALAE if solutions profferred are to be sustainable".***
>
> David Karap Kirui

The meeting decided that in order to adequately respond to the issues raised and to diagnose the root causes of the crisis, more background information was needed. To that end the following documents were requested:

☐ The Evaluation Report
☐ The Minutes of the 1993 Executive Council Meeting
☐ Report of the Executive Council
☐ Consultation-Reflection meeting
☐ The Minutes of the October 7th and 8th meeting
☐ Statement of issues with the donors.

In addition to the above sources the meeting requested information on donor attitudes towards AALAE.

On the financial status of the Association, the meeting requested a status report on the AALAE financial situation. The report was to include the bank accounts and balance, savings and investments and a declaration of assets of the Association[33]

All these documents were to be presented to the next meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee slated for 30th October but later postponed to the 31st October since the chairman was not available on the earlier date.

Meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee of 31st October

Mathew Bosunga, a member of the Executive Councils of AALAE and ICAE was in attendance. On commencement of the meeting, the following documents were identified and numbered serially; they formed the agenda for the meeting:

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee held on 18th October 1995;
2. Reports of the secretary general's Missions to Tehran and Khartoum;
3. Active Strategic Hybernation;
4. Proposal for Investigative Audit;
5. Summary of Income for 1987 - 1995;
6. Income and Expenditure for period ended 30th October 1995;

7. Agenda Item No. 5

On Matters Arising from the Minutes, the meeting was requested to address the mandate of the Secretariat Advisory Committee. The following questions were posed:

"Which decisions of the Executive Council can SAC execute?"

"Which decisions of SAC should be referred to the Executive Council given the advisory nature of SAC?"

The "statement of Issues with Donors" which had been prepared by Alaoy was circulated pending presentation and discussion at the next meeting of SAC.[34]

On mission reports the secretary general presented a rationale for his visits to Tehran and Khartoum. The issue of *Mpambo* was discussed at length.

On agenda item no. 3 the secretary general presented a paper entitled "Active Strategic Hybernation: Some Thoughts on a Strategy for a Great Leap Forward for AALAE". The paper presented proposals to "reorganise" the AALAE secretariat and commenced by stating:

> *"Under given, specific and concrete situations, the most courageous action by the bravest of Generals is to retreat! Lenin termed the same wisdom as `one step backward; two steps forward'."*[35]

The paper made proposals for what it called "New Organisational Profile" in terms of leadership, personnel, programme and "daring resource mobilization". The proposals included a process of rethinking AALAE by the members, donors' meeting, search for a new secretary general, the Third General Assembly, and a number of resource mobilization activities.

On personnel, he proposed additional responsibilities for himself. "The secretary general shall provide overall political, intellectual, professional, technical, diplomatic, and administrative leadership and animation."

In addition to the secretary general the following staff positions were proposed:

☐ Programme coordinator
☐ Information coordinator and secretary
☐ Part-time accountant
☐ One accounts and general purposes clerk

He informed the meeting of his "decision not to seek, and if offered, not to accept, the position of secretary general of AALAE after my contract expires at the end of 1996". He also spoke of "the departure of the current chairman of AALAE at the next General Assembly". He proposed a study or investigation of the crisis "with the view of developing a framework and mechanisms to avoid similar occurence in the future".

The proposal was seen as a strategy to get rid of one of the programme officers from the secretariat. Instead of the two programme officers there would be a programme coordinator.

In response to the proposal the meeting advised that it should be considered in the light and context of the other proposals and thoughts on re-organisation of AALAE. These include:

- The minutes of the meeting of October 13.
- The minutes of the meeting of SAC of October 18.
- "What Future for AALAE?"
- "A Proposal to Reorganise AALAE for the 1990s and Beyond"
- Report of the Executive Council Consultation - Reflection of 1993
- Papers on Decentralisation
- "Re-Thinking AALAE as a True Place of Encounter for the Membership by Ekundayo J.D. Thompson"
- "Antecedents to the AALAE Crisis: Views from the Donors/Partners and Members".

The meeting further advised that a synthesis of the major recommendations and proposals for the reorganisation of AALAE be prepared, and noted that the financial crisis had brought about creativity which was demonstrated by the avalanche of thoughts, proposals and recommendations on reorganisation. It also advised against further staff reduction because staff reduction in the past had not had a positive effect on the financial situation of AALAE. Since 1993 up to six members of staff had departed from the Association. The meeting noted that the 'financial crisis' did not subside with the departure of the six employees. The issue then was, how to resolve the problem with the remaining personnel.

A Task Force was proposed to synthesise the major recommendations, proposals, and thoughts on reorganisation and make concrete proposals on the way forward. It noted that reorganisation should be fundamental and not cosmetic. The meeting cautioned that the crisis should not be resolved against individuals and that the AALAE problem should not be personalised. It called for the identification of the root causes of the crisis.

Discussion on "Finances and Financial Situation" was deferred to the next meeting of SAC scheduled for December 15 1995. The meeting never took place and no explanation was ever given.

In a paper titled "Professional Opinion on the Management and Financial situation at AALAE" authored by David M. Nyende and dated May 4, 1996, reference was made to "The secretary general's departure." It stated:

a) SAC was right to decline to endorse the decisions of the ad-hoc meeting because its mandate was dubious. The appointment and removal of secretary general is vested in the EXCO. The departure from an organisation of the chief executive officer (CEO) has such wide ranging implications that it needs to be properly explained so that the correct signals are received.

b) In October, the secretary general, the 'financial advisor' of AALAE and two programme staff held a meeting where the secretary general was encouraged to step down immediately and appointed one of the programme officers as acting secretary general. He stated that, when a ship is sinking, the last person to desert it is the captain. Similarly, in a crisis, the CEO cannot be the first person to flee unless criminal charges are to be conferred against him in which case he should be taken to court (or jail).

c) In October SAC rejected the ad-hoc meeting's decisions. NGO experience has shown that the exit of a CEO in acrimonious circumstances with their employers leads to near collapse of such organisations: Donors are normally the first to make rapid retreats followed by associated networks.

According to the "Consultant"

d) The present secretary general's contract would expire in 8 months' time. This is not a long time. In fact he should play a roie to ensure for a smooth hand over including introduction of a new secretary general to AALAE's partners by the existing secretary general.

What the "Consultant" did not say is that, the secretary general was part of the departure decision and advanced reasons why he should go although the members took his offer with a pinch of salt. The strategy of "one step backwards and two steps forward" was well known.

The "Consultant's" explanation was given in May, seven months into the crisis. In July, AALAE was on the brink of collapse and the donors and partners had commissioned an investigative audit.

References & Endnotes/Chap 6

31. Minutes of the meeting of 10th October 1995.

See also,

(i) Thompson J.D., "Resolving the Funding Crisis in AALAE: A Strategic Approach Discussion Paper for the the strategic planning meeting 13th - 14th October, 1995".

(ii) Minutes of the meeting of the Secretary General and Senior Management staff of AALAE held on Friday 13th October 1995, at the Sagret Hotel Board Room.

32. ibid p.6

33. Minutes of the meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee held on 18th October.

34. Alaoy, Antecedents to the AALAE Crisis: Views from the Donors/Partners and Members.

35. Wangoola, P. Active Strategic Hybernation: Some Thoughts on a strategy for a Great Leap Forward for AALAE. Khartoum, October 1995.

We should denounce corrupt NGOs and publish their bad practices in the newspapers

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7

SKELETONS IN THE CUPBOARD

For a long time rumours had been doing the rounds in Kenya, and in the capitals of the countries where the membership of AALAE is widely spread, with regard to financial impropriety at the secretariat. In Kenya, speculations about financial mismanagement were fuelled not only by the extravagant and ostentatious lifestyle of certain members of staff but also as a result of their private business interests.

It was widely believed that staff member's involvement in the importation of reconditioned cars from Japan was compromising their official positions in AALAE. They spent most of their official time out of the secretariat and they were frequently seen in Kampala by AALAE members who were curious to know what they were doing there.

The finance officer's frequent absence from the secretariat necessitated the employment of a second finance officer, but this did not solve the problems of the finance office mainly because the authority and mandate of the second finance officer was limited. Matters which had to be referred to the finance officer had to wait or be kept pending due to his perennial absence. The problem of absenteeism was compounded by the fact that the finance officer was also responsible for administration, consequently administrative matters which needed urgent attention also had to wait.

In the absence of the secretary general and the finance and administration officer, the decision-making process came to a virtual halt. The loss of US $ 600,000 which had been requested for the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme was due to the fact that both the secretary general and the finance officer who should have taken action on the proposal were away from the office.

Treatment of the Auditor's Queries

A reputable international firm of auditors which carried out the annual external audit of AALAE had, over the years, called attention to a number of financial and administrative irregularities. Neither the treasurer, nor the SAC took action on the auditor's queries. There are a number of explanations why action was not taken. Firstly, the queries were never brought to the attention of the governing bodies namely the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee or to the Treasurer. In her letter of resignation dated 16th May 1996, the Treasurer stated that,

> *"Ever since the Birth of AALAE, no comments or recommendations from auditors have been brought to my attention or that of the Executive Committee to the best of my knowledge".*

Secondly, the finance officer, in a departure from normal practice took upon himself to respond to the auditor's queries without bringing them to the attention of the SAC.

Thirdly, documents and information relating to finance, including auditor's reports and financial reports, were concealed from the programme officers. It was after the emergence of the crisis that the programme officers had the privilege, for the first time, to read what the auditors had been saying all these years. It is assumed that the reason for the secrecy with regard to financial matters is that there had been misrepresentation of financial facts especially in reports that were sent to the donors.

The 1992 Auditor's Report [36]

The Report to the management for the year ended 31 December, 1992 called attention to the following:

Non compliance with the Income Tax Act with regard to the computation of P.A.Y.E.

The Auditors recommended that:

> *"The Income Tax Act should be complied with"*, and warned that *"The Income Tax Department is in a reconciliatory spirit and the decision to comply with the Law should be made soon to correct the position with effect from January 1993"*.

On creditors Reconciliation the Auditors noted that:

> *"Creditors ledger balances are not regularly reconciled with the supplier statements. There is therefore a risk of disputes with the vendors remaining unresolved for a long time."*

The Auditors repeated their previous year's [1991] recommendation that "regular reconciliation of creditors ledger balances with supplier statements should be prepared".

On fixed assets, the auditors called attention to the fact that AALAE did not have a fixed assets register, and said that:

> *This is a weakness in internal control in an area where a substantial amount of the Association's funds have been invested. For example, the absence of a fixed assets register makes it difficult to implement a physical verification exercise.*

They repeated their previous year's recommendation that "a physical verification exercise should be carried out following the introduction of a fixed assests register to enhance management over fixed assets".

The queries were responded to by the finance officer "on behalf of management" as follows:

> *"We take note of your observation. We are putting together a team to study the situation and advise on measures to take to correct the situation"*
>
> *"By the next audit, this situation will have been rectified now that we have a more enhanced computer programme (Newsviews 1.41) which will facilitate a monthly reconciliation of all creditors balance".*
>
> *"We shall do the best during 1993 to address the above issue".*

The 1993 Auditors' Report

Insurance Cover and Fixed Assets

The auditors noted that the sum insured for fixed assets indicated a significant under cover and recommended that, "fixed assets should be adequately covered for insurable calamities".

"Management" made the following comment:

> *"This has been noted and we are taking the necessary steps to have all our assets revaluated and an additional insurance cover secured".*

On fixed assets register the auditors again called attention to the absence of a fixed assets register:

> *"The Association does not maintain a fixed assets register. The absence of a fixed assets register makes it difficult to implement a physical verification exercise".*

They repeated their previous year's [1992] recommendation that,

> *"a physical verification exercise should be carried out following the introduction of a fixed assets register to enhance management control over fixed assets".*

"Management" made the following comments:

> *"In an attempt to do "1" above we shall open a fixed assets register in time for the next audit".*

On Bank Reconciliation the auditors said:

> *"Bank Reconciliation [——] are prepared on a monthly basis. However there is no evidence of checking of these reconciliations by the Finance and Administration Officer".*

They recommended that, "all bank reconciliations should be checked by the finance and administration officer and such checking should be evidenced".

On salaries, computation of PAYE, the auditors noted that "the computation of PAYE did not comply with Income Tax Act. They emphasized that "The responsibility of remitting the correct PAYE to the Income Tax Department rests on the Association". They warned that "If any tax due on the PAYE has not been deducted from the employees earnings, the Association would be required to remit the full amount including penalties thereon".

They then repeated their previous years' recommendations (1991 and 1992) that "the Income Tax Act should be complied with", and that "The decision to comply with the law should be made soon to correct the position with effect from January 1994".

"Management" made the following comment:

> *"A committee looking into this matter is yet to present its proposals. This hopefully should be in place soonest possible".*[37]

The truth is that there was no committee looking into that matter and if it did ever exist, it must have been sitting elsewhere, certainly not in Kenya.

The 1994 Auditors' Report

On salaries, the auditors noted that "computation of PAYE does not comply with the Income Tax Act in the following instances ..."

They repeated their previous years' recommendations (1991, 1992, 1993) that,

> *"The Income Tax Act should be complied with in respect of PAYE".*

"Management" commented as follows:

> *"This is noted".*

On remittance of statutory deductions, the auditors explained that, statutory deductions are required to be remitted to the relevant authorities promptly. In particular PAYE should be remitted to the income tax authorities by the 9th of the month following the month of deduction.

They recommended that "statutory deductions should be remitted promptly to the relevant authorities to avoid penalties".

"Management" commented as follows:

> *"This was purely an oversight. We will ensure this is not repeated unless for reasons of lack of finances at the material time".*

On fixed assets register the auditors noted for the fourth time in four years that,

> *"The Association does not maintain a fixed assets register. This is a weakness in internal control in an area where a substantial amount of the Association's funds have been invested. For instance, the absence of a fixed assets register makes it difficult to:*
>
> *(i) implement a physical verification exercise*
>
> *(ii) determine the net book value of assets disposed of during the year since the cost and accumulated depreciation associated with a particular asset cannot be easily determined".*

They repeated their previous recommendation that "fixed assets should be adequately covered for insurable calamities".

"Management" commented that "this will be done by the next audit".

On bank balances they noted that,

> *"The balance in the foreign currency bank accounts were not revalued at year end to reflect the Kenya shilling equivalent contrary to the Association's accounting policies."*

They reminded "management" of the accounting policy which states that:

> *"assets and liabilities in foreign currencies at year end should be translated to Kenya shillings at the rate of exchange ruling at the Balance sheet date".*

"Management" noted the query and said that careful monitoring will be done in the future.

On bank reconciliation, the auditors advised that it should "be prepared and initialled by a responsible official, and any old reconciling items followed up promptly."

"Management" noted the comment and said that "This will henceforth be done".

On updating of cash books the auditors noted that:

> *"Cash books are not updated on a regular basis. For example, January 1995 to March 1995 cash books had not been updated by the time of the audit visit".*

They recommended that "cash books should be updated on a regular basis and reviewed by a responsible official".

On debtors it was noted that, a house for which a deposit of KSh. 11,000 was paid had been vacated in 1993 but that the deposit was not recovered. They recommended that, "recovery efforts should be stepped up to ensure that the amount is recovered". "Management" said that, they were following that matter with the landlord who had promised to pay by the end of August 1995.[38]

Although the auditors had repeatedly called attention to irregularities no action had been taken to correct the anomalous situation. To the discerning reader the reasons are not difficult to fathom. First, internal control mechanisms were glaringly lacking in AALAE. Second, the finance officer was the one who handled all financial matters viz initiation and authorisation of expenditure, approval of expenditure, preparation of payment vouchers and cheques, signing of cheques, encashment of cheques, spending of the money, accounting for expenditure, preparation for audit, and handling of the auditors' queries. It is indeed unbelievable that the auditors' comments and recommendations had gone unheeded since 1987 when the incumbent finance officer and secretary general took over responsibility for the management of the affairs of AALAE. Gross irresponsibility bordering on criminality, is an apt description of the situation which existed in AALAE. The Income Tax Act was violated. The finance officer' s response to the auditors' query with regard to non-payment of statutory deductions *"we will ensure this is not repeated unless for reasons of lack of finances at the material time"* was outrightly irresponsible (emphasis mine).

The finance officer was making that unintelligent statement after he had made deductions from the monthly salaries of members of staff. What ever happened to the money? Inspite of the reminders with regard to an assets register, the Association did not make efforts to maintain one. In the absence of an assets register it was difficult to verify the assets of the Association. The Board of Trustees which has constitutional responsibility for the assets of AALAE has not met, some say, since it was elected.

The Constitution of AALAE makes adequate provision for transparency with regard to the accounts of the Association. Article 18 states that:

> *"The books of accounts and all documents relating thereto and a register of all members of the Association shall be available for inspection at the Headquarters of the Association..."*

Article 15 provides that:

> *"A copy of the Auditor's report on the accounts and statements together with such accounts shall be furnished to all members annually..."*[39]

Deficit Financial Management

As the financial situation in AALAE worsened the embattled secretary general made frantic efforts to communicate with the membership in the hope that they will show sympathy and empathy for his precarious positon.

In a statement on the "Programme and Financial situation at the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education" dated May 1996 the secretary general reported:

> *"Following a growing deficit in our accounts over the past few years, which for the year ended 1995 stands at 4.7 million Kenya shillings, we feel compelled to explain how, in our view, this has come about".*

But in a letter dated 14th April, 1996, to Messrs David Nyende and John Kananda he said:

> *"We all know that we had a problem, but yesterday when I got a copy of the draft audited accounts I was shocked by the magnitude of the deficit. For this to come out at the audit particularly worried me".*

Table 1: Deficits Between 1992 and 1995

Year	Deficit in KShs.
1992	720,210.00
1993	932,380.00
1994	1,600,231.00
1995	4,706,043.00

Source: Auditors' Reports

The deficit for 1995 is difficult to explain. It came inspite of the cost-cutting measures which included staff reduction in 1993. In addition to the termination of the services of five members of staff, office space had been reduced by about 50% and fewer programme activities were undertaken. By 1994, three more members of staff departed from AALAE.

Table 2: Number of full-time members of staff, by gender and nationality who left the services of AALAE between 1992 and 1994

Total No. of Staff	*No. of Staff who left*	*No. of Male*	*No. of Female*		*Nationality*	
				Kenyan	*Senegalese*	*Zambian*
13	8	2	6	6	1	1

Source: AALAE Staff List

Table 3: Income of AALAE between 1987 and 1995.

Year	*Income Aount in KShs.*
1987	8,685,747.00
1988	12,952,665.00
1989	18,181,874.00
1990	22,282,842.00
1991	25,085,164.00
1992	30,652,869.00
1993	43,218,343.00
1994	31,843,784.00
1995	16,437,080.00

Source: Finance Officer's Summary of Income for 1987 - 1995 presented at the chairman's consultative meeting on Sunday 8th October 1995.

The above data indicate that even with (ruthless) "cost-cutting" measures instituted the deficit continued to increase. In her letter of resignation, the treasurer of AALAE suggested the reasons for the increasing deficit when she states "staff reduced by the EXCO as a crisis measure managed to come back on the payroll purportedly as consultants" she also says: "Any cheques which I queried rarely came back to me but presumably went to other signatories with less scruples..."[40]

The currency of popular opinion is that the problems of AALAE are due to mismanagement. There is speculation that there could have been questionable transactions in the following areas:

- Operation of bank accounts
- Investments
- Salaries, allowances and honoraria
- Rent
- Purchase and use of airline tickets
- Purchases of office equipment and supplies
- Acquisition and disposal of assets
- Use of programme funds for non programme purposes
- Use of communication facilities for private business
- Improper accounting and misuse of designated funds
- Medical insurance
- Award of contracts
- Duty free facility
- Special programmes and project (Development Partnerships, CIVICUS, People's Alliance for Social Dev.)
- Non observance of financial rules and procedures in the conduct of financial affairs.

In a statement on the programme and financial situation at the Association signed by Mr. John Kananda and Paul Wangoola, futile attempts were made to explain to the membership the reasons for the quagmire in which AALAE is languishing. They say "**we found ourselves eating into some programme and staff benefits funds** to keep the organisation going" (p.7) This statement is with reference to the Staff Provident Fund which has been depleted without the authority of the Board of Trustees. According to the AALAE's Constitution.

> *"all investments and securities shall be vested in the Board of Trustees".*
> (Article 11.)

The Auditor's reports describe the Staff Provident Fund as "Restricted", meaning that it is controlled. But the uncontrolled use of the fund has made nonsense of the provision of the Constitution, internal financial rules and procedures, and conventional financial management practices. When staff salaries could not be paid for several months, some members of staff requested part of their provident fund as a survival measure. One member's application which was approved by the secretary general was turned down by the finance officer because "there was no money in the Provident Fund". So a situation of "No salaries, No Provident Fund" has arisen in AALAE.

Bank Accounts

The operation of bank accounts is an area which calls for urgent investigation. Information received during the research for this book indicated that AALAE was operating eleven bank accounts in the United states of America, Europe and Kenya.[41]

The secretary general accepts that AALAE operates the following accounts:

Table 4: Accounts operated by AALAE[42]

Account No.	*Bank of Operation*	*Currency of Operation*
85 00 00 38	Micro Bank/CBA	US Dollars
309 03	Commercial Bank of Africa	US Dollars
11 25 00 48	Bank of America	US Dollars
56 50 00 5	Barclays Bank of Kenya	US Dollars
31 20 89 41 1	First Star Bank	US Dollars
11 25 00 64	Unknown	US Dollars
11 25 00 56	Unknown	Pounds Sterling
270 41	Micro Bank CBA	Kenya Shillings

Accounts numbers 114833 and 270064 are not mentioned in the secretary general's statement while account number 01 51 85 10 02 is given as the reference for account number 85 00 00 38 with Micro Bank.

Several question arise:

> Why does AALAE need all the accounts listed above?
>
> When were the accounts opened and in which name or names?
>
> Who are the signatories?
>
> Did the treasurer of AALAE know about the existence of all the accounts?
>
> Did the Secretariat Advisory Committee know?
>
> Did the programme officers know?
>
> Who paid what into the accounts?
>
> Why keep eleven accounts and two accountants when there is 'no money'?
>
> Would it not be prudent to close some of the accounts and reduce bank charges?

The secretary general said that "No substantive new accounts have been opened since the merger (1984)" Is the secretary general saying that all the accounts listed were in operation at the time of the merger? If they were in the names of "the African Adult Education Association" and the "Afrolit Society" the predecessors of AALAE, how were they transformed into the accounts of AALAE? Account number 11 25 00 48 was an Afrolit account now Staff Provident Fund and Fixed Deposit Accounts seven years after the merger.

A number of transactions with regard to staff provident fund and fixed deposits have taken place. The finance officer's letter to the manager, Bank of America dated 9th January 1991 reads:

> *Dear Sir,*
>
> *It is our intention that after the necessary changes have been effected to account No. 11 25 00 48, this account shall be maintained strictly for staff funds (accruing benefits) which shall be dispensed upon retirement or resignation from employment of this Association.*

In another letter dated 17th February 1993 which was addressed to the manager, Bank of America the finance officer said:

> *At the same time I would like to take advantage of this letter to state that Account No. 11 25 00 48 will remain strictly as a staff fund account.*

In their statement, contrary to the above instructions, Wangoola and Kananda said "we found ourselves eating into some programme and staff benefits funds to keep the organization going". The implication of this statement is that the staff provident fund has been used for other purposes, and in the process the rules were breached.

A deposit account No. 11 48 33 in the name of AALAE was also not mentioned in the secretary general's list of accounts although the account had been operated according to correspondence dated 29th November 1989, 19th December 1990, 5th March 1991, 22nd April 1991.

Nature of the Transactions

Table 5: Fixed Deposit Account Transactions

Date of Transaction	*Nature of Transaction*	*Amount*
29th November, 1989	Telegraphic Transfer	US $ 50,000
20th November, 1990	Telegraphic Transfer	US $ 50,000
19th December, 1990	Cheque Credit for six months	US $ 25,000

Date of Transaction	*Nature of Transaction*	*Amount*
5th March, 1991	Credit for six months	US $ 30,000
22nd April, 1991	Transfer	US $ 50,000

Further question arise:

> Why didn't the secretary general mention Account No. 11 48 33 in his report?
>
> How were the interests on the deposits accounted for and utilised?

Payment of US $ 9,000

The finance officer had given instructions, by his letters of 9th January 1991 and 17th February 1993 with regard to the status of Account No. 11 25 00 48. But by a letter dated 14th July 1993 signed by Paul Wangoola and John Kananda an amount of US $ 9,000 was paid to a non member of staff at City Bank A/C No. 72 033 57 Makuhari Branch, Tokyo, Japan. The secretary general has explained that the payment under reference belonged to the finance officer but he did not explain why it was made to a third party. The Investigative Audit should look into the nature, purpose and correctness of the transaction.

References and Notes

36 Information before 1992 is not available

37. Report to Management for the year ended 31 December 1993

38. African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, Matters Arising from the Audit for year ended 31 December 1994.

39. The Constitution of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, pp 11 - 12.

40. Opiyo, M.B.A. Letter of Resignation dated 16th May, 1996, op. cit.

Following are some of the reasons for the Treasurer' s resignation:

- Dissatisfaction in relation to the administration and management issues especially in relation to financial matters.
- Issues raised by the secretariat staff and donors have repeatedly not been fully addressed especially those dealing with financial matters.
- Ever since the Birth of AALAE [1984] no comments or recommendations from auditors have been brought to my attention or that of the Executive Committee.
- Staff reduced by EXCO as a crisis measures came back on the payroll purportedly as consultants.
- Any cheque I queried rarely came back to me but presumably went to other signatories with less scruples...

When I insisted on being given copies of the auditors comments since my attention was drawn to them, I never got any except the 1995 comments. These comments show serious lapses on the part of the Finance Administrator and the secretary general on either taking action on the recommendations made or drawing the attention of the Treasurer, the Secretariat Advisory Committee or even presumably the chairman of AALAE, on the serious issues raised by the auditors...

The 1995 Auditors comments indicate serious lapses especially those relating to statutory deductions, checks and controls, rescue measures, segregation of financial duties, computation of P.A.Y.E. and update of cash book among others.

41. Thompson, Ekundayo J.D. "The AALAE Crisis: More Questions than Answers".

42. Wangoola, P. "On the Allegations by Messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE".

Like it or not the rascals, scoundrels and rogues of this world are generally more interesting characters than good guys

Nigel Blundell

8

THE ROOTS OF THE CRISIS

A "statement in support of an independent investigative audit of the administrative and financial affairs of AALAE" was prepared and accompanied by a memorandum (dated November 24) to the chairman and members of the Secretariat Advisory Committee. It had been hoped that the meeting of SAC scheduled for 15th December would discuss it and commission an audit which would have sought to identify the root cause(s) of the crisis. The consensus had been that the causes of the crisis should be identified and diagnosed. That meeting never took place and there was no explanation as to why it was put off.

Subsequently, no action was taken on the proposal and neither was there any response. In the absence of a response from SAC, the programme officers called on the chair of SAC and the treasurer to apprise them on the worsening situation, but the visits and discussions did not result in any action by SAC.

In the absence of action by the relevant constitutional organs and in the light of deepening crisis, action was taken to inform the membership of AALAE of the situation in their organisation and what had been done thus far to resolve the crisis. This was a personal communication to the members and friends of AALAE and it presented a chronology of the events that had taken place. It was done in view of our collective responsibility to the membership in terms of provision of information on the critical situation in their Association.

A number of letters were written to the chairman of AALAE who was resident in Uganda at the time. The letters, which were sent by recorded mail to ensure delivery, went unacknowledged. In the absence of even an acknowledgement a decision was taken to write an open letter to the chairman of AALAE in March 1996 to force action. The letter was widely circulated; it was sent to members of AALAE, including members of the Executive Council, donors, partners, and other concerned parties. Even then, the chairman chose to remain silent.

Calling the National Council of NGOs to Action

In the absence of action by the governing bodies of AALAE and by its key officers a complaint was lodged with the National Council of NGOs. By this time however, the secretary general had become very hostile and uncharacteristically aggressive.

Events Leading to the NGO Council

On Thursday January 18, the author received a letter from the secretary general dated 16th January 1996, on "The Unity, Integrity and Singleness of Purpose at the AALAE Secretariat". The letter was a request to J.D. Thompson to :

1. "Disclose to the chairman of SAC and the chairman of AALAE who beyond SAC and the AALAE chairman you shared with or made the said documents available", and further to:
2. "Let me have any other contacts you may have made in respect of this matter to enable me take appropriate action immediately".

The letter was copied to the chairman of SAC and the chairman of AALAE.

J.D. Thompson considered that request impertinent and ignored it, considering he was being requested to disclose information to the chairman of AALAE who had not acknowledged the letters and memoranda which called on him to take action. He saw the secretary general's letter as part of a strategy to cover up and hatch a scheme of disinformation. The reaction of the secretary general was to irregularly terminate J.D. Thompson's services. That was an action which warranted the intervention of the National Council of NGOs in accordance with the NGO Act and Code of Conduct.

In "Facts and Figures"[41], allegations of mismanagement were presented to the NGO Council in respect of breach of the NGOs Code of Conduct.

The NGO Code of Conduct

Section 24 of the Non-Governmental Organisation Coordination Act of 1990 gives powers to the Council of NGOs to make the Non-Governmental Organisations Council Code of Conduct, 1995. The Code makes provision for the Regulatory Committee, which shall, among other functions, consider and determine any application, complaint or matter brought before it ...

It further provides that:

> *"A complaint against a registered organisation for breach of this code may be made to the committee by any person".*

On the "conduct of organisations", the code states:

> *"every registered organisation shall observe the cardinal values of probity, self-regulation, justice, service, co-operation, prudence and respect".*

It further states the following:

Clause 7 In the observance of probity, an organisation shall -

a) perform its duties incorruptibly;
b) at all times avoid any conflict between official and private interests;
f) be honest and impartial in dealings with people.

Clause 9(b) practice fairness and equality in all its operations;
(e) adhere to an uphold the rule of law.

Clause 12(e) resolve conflicts amicably;
(c) uphold the rights of others.[44]

The Council of NGOs took action on the complaint and requested the secretary general to address the allegations made.

Secretary General's Explanation

In a paper "On the Allegations by messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE" the secretary general attempted to address the allegations made in "Facts and Figures". 'On the chairman's silence he says:

> *40% or more of communication in African Languages consists of "silence", i.e. non-verbal communication. So when the chairman of AALAE, the chairman of SAC, the chairman of the Board of Trustees and the treasurer "keep quiet" after receiving messrs Thompson and Alaoy's allegations, it is not that they are not communicating or acting.*[45]

The Treasurer had since acted by resigning

Those who read the secretary general's response have been wondering how the chairman of a regional literacy and adult education Association could choose to be "silent" when his house was on fire. They said that it would be a strange African who would not raise an alarm and summon the neighbours assistance when the house is burning. What was more, in the age of INTERNET the chairman's preferred mode of communication remains "non-verbal".

The Powers of the Secretary General

Article 10 of the AALAE Constitution provides for a secretary general who shall be the administrative head and chief executive of the Association. The powers and functions of the secretary general are defined as:

> *"responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the headquarters of the Association;*
>
> *responsibility for the appointment of junior staff;*
>
> *co-ordination of all programmes of the Association".*

The Personnel Policies of AALAE states that:

> *The secretary general shall be one of the legal representatives of AALAE and as such is authorised to issue directives or/and deal with all matters relating to staff contracts; revise all administrative contracts; determine office practice and procedures from time to time EXCEPT with matters relating to staff emoluments and engagement of consultants whose appointments exceed three months, in which case he/she shall decide with AALAE's Secretariat Advisory Committee.*

On appointments the Personnel Policies state that:

> *Senior and executive staff shall be appointed by the secretary general on the authority of the Council's appointed body.*

On abolition of posts:

> *"If at any time, a post at AALAE's secretariat is deemed to be redundant, the Executive Council acting on the advice of the Secretariat Advisory Committee shall abolish the post. The incumbent so affected shall then suffer without prejudice termination by notice as stated in the Employment Agreement".*

Termination of the services of J.D. Thompson by the secretary general was therefore unconstitutional and contrary to the provisions of the Personnel Policies of AALAE. The secretary general's letter of 9th February terminating J.D. Thompson's services implied that Thompson's post of "consultant coordinator" was redundant because there was no money to continue the project which he coordinated. The action to terminate was done without reference to the Secretariat Advisory Committee.

Thompson was a programme officer whose duties extended beyond the Technical Assistance Project which came to an end in 1993 and which was evaluated early 1994.

Over 1994 and 1995, J.D. Thompson undertook the following programme tasks:

- Coordination of the Building of Instistutional Capacities Programme
- Provision of Technical Assistance to the Kenya Adult Learners' Association and the Uganda Adult Learners Association. KALA was assisted to prepare a three-year programme (1995 -1997) which was funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy.
- Organisation and facilitation of the Regional Encounter of Learners
- Coordination of the Community Education Network
- Coordination of the South-South Exchange Programme in Sudan
- Tasks related to the publication of '*The Spider*' as a member of the Editorial Committee
- Publication of the books *Curriculum Development in Non-Formal Education* and *Community Education and Empowerment in the 90s*.
- Writing of articles for The Community, and for various publications of the members including the Kenya Adult Education Association Journal.
- Handling of over 90% of the correspondence from AALAE members.

The preparation of the Expanded Technical Assistance Proposal was just a small task which was undertaken with regard to the Technical Assistance Project. It should be noted that various communication from the AALAE Secretariat including the secretary general's letter of 16th January 1996, referred to J.D. Thompson as a programme officer.

References & Endnotes/Chap 8

43. Thompson Ekundayo J.D. The AALAE Crisis: Facts and Figures Nairobi, May 1996.

44. The Government Printer. Kenya Gazette Supplement ACTS, 1991 Nairobi, 18th January, 1991 p. 8f.

See also Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 59 of 8th September 1995.

45. Wangoola, P. On the Allegations by Messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE.

Let me also say that if we are not careful, we stand a big chance of having the NGO community in Kenya destroyed by a few self-seekers who have turned NGOs into personal businesses

Abuaga

9

ACTION BY THE DONORS AND PARTNERS

As a consequence of the failure of the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee to act, the loud silence of the chairman and inactivity and growing hostility at the AALAE secretariat, there was compulsion to resort to the donors and partners who had provided funds for the programme activities of AALAE. Programme funds had been provided on the basis of agreements which required AALAE to provide financial and narrative reports by certain deadlines. AALAE was undoubtedly in breach of the Agreements because the activities for which funds had been provided had not been undertaken.

Between January and September 1996 a total of US $ 265,153 had been received from the donors and other sources as the following table indicates:

Table 6: Income for the period January to September 1995

Source	*Income (US $)*
Canadian International Development Agency	53,567
German Adult Education Association	65,514
Swedish International Development Agency	69,075
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation	56,400
International Community Education Association	10,000
United Nations Development Programme	5,000
British Council	2,000
Membership Subscriptions	2,280
Sale of Publications	1,317
Total	**265,153**

Source: Handwritten statement of income presented by the finance officer to the Chairman's Consultative Meeting on 8th October 1995

After the meeting another statement of income and expenditure for the period January to 30th October 1995 was prepared and circulated by the finance officer.

Table 7: Expenditure for the period up to 30.10.95

Income Source	*Amount US $*
Donations (Donor Funds)	361,827
Membership Subscriptions	2,280
Sale of Publications	1,317
Bank Interest	690
Total	**366,144**

When compared with the expenditure for the same period there was a deficit of US $ 14,161. It was difficult to understand why there was a deficit when most of proposed activities were not undertaken, and for which earmarked funding had been received. It should be emphasised that the two programme officers were not privy to financial information. They hardly saw the financial reports which were sent to donors and did not know how money was being spent.

The deficits which ran back to 1992 could not be understood either; it was assumed that bad financial management had resulted in such a situation given the amount of money AALAE had mobilised from various sources in the past as Table 8 indicates.

Table 8: Income between 1987 and 1995

SOURCE OF INCOME	YEARS (AMOUNT IN KSHS)								
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Canadian International Development Agency	1502985	3599954	3675816	5550117	7711410	8066303	11432984	5477026	2946185
Inter-Church Coordinating Office for Development	3400975	2632106	3150518	2428207	2222319	2051236	-	-	-
German Adult Education Association	2323631	2179634	2270246	5744129	5672275	7006398	13719711	9404978	3603270
INTERMEDIA	71304	52949	210524	344123	72199	453308	-	-	-
UNESCO	16759	-	10543	162000	-	-	937588	-	-
International Council for Adult Education	260820	-	1993531	205429	137939	53171	1576993	-	-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
International Community Education Association	518609	762498	158180	-	-		-	-	550000
MOTT Foundation	-	-	717689	-	617700	681751	950306	1008855	-
Peace Fund Canada	164359	477392		197309	159230	977840	-	414556	-
PACT	79146	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lesotho Association for Non-Formal Education	68646		-	-	-			-	
Membership Subscription	235103	-	102914	221047	35540	34247	42910	10290	137500
Sale of Publication	15926	-	26666	237988	27170	28807	59270	59445	82500
Other Income	27484	81311	615815	1601254	931038	537775	685000	1945941	-
DSE (German Foundation)	-	-	407652	-			-	-	-
Swedish Inter. Development Agency (SIDA)	-	-	517143	1279923	1486820	1908356	1068024	2438457	3799125
U.S.A. for Africa	-	3166830	1400471	1071300	1163585	-		-	-
International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)	-	-	12627	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norwegian Agency for Dev. Coop. (NORAD)	-	-	-	1019043	2374895	2524604	4816618	3507546	4933500
OXFAM AMERICA	-	-	117067	-	-	-	-	-	-
Partnership Africa Canada	-		1805565	875339	2473044	5242584	2460674	6242204	-
Canadian High Commission Harare	-	-	287141	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forum for African Dev. Organisation	-	-	147113	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ford Foundation	-	-	526809	-	-	-	-	-	-
African Development Bank	-	-	27844	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNDP	-	-	-	600000	-	-	1728435	4716368	275000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
SYNERGOS	-	-	-	395756	-	-	961219	-	-
Foundation De France	-	-	-	**349878**	-	-	-	-	-
UNIFEM	-	-	-	-	-	1086489	2469511	-	-
Netherlands Embassy	-	-	-	-	-	-	**309100**	-	-
Peoples Alliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	510000	-
British Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**110000**
Total Funding	8,685,747	12,952,665	18,181,847	22,282,824	25,085,164	30,652,869	43,218,343	31,843,784	16,437,0

The major donors and partners were informed of the crisis situation and were requested to ensure that the funds they had provided for specific programmes were used for the purpose or purposes intended. The German Adult Education Association (DVV), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Agency Co-operation (SIDA)and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) were informed. ICAE is the global umbrella organisation for adult education of which AALAE is a member.

The letters to DVV, NORAD, ICAE and the Canadian High Commission were acknowledged. In addition, the Canadian High Commission requested for more information. But it was DVV and SIDA who took action to call the secretary general of AALAE to account. In a letter to the secretary general of AALAE dated 7th May 1996, DVV gave a number of conditions which had to be met before funds for 1996 could be released. These included provision of the auditor's report for 1995, and invalidation of "the allegations brought up by Mr. J.D. Thompson".[46] SIDA took action to commission an audit.

In another letter by the Executive Director of ICAE, dated June 20, 1996, to the programme officer, Education Division, Department for Democracy and Social Development of the SIDA, the executive director called attention to the fact that "the situation at AALAE appears to be deteriorating rapidly". He made reference to the treasurer's letter of resignation and copy of a proposal to set up a new organisation.[47] He said that at first, "it appeared to be a situation arising from management decisions relating to the fact that AALAE had suffered considerable losses in revenue from traditional sources .... In recent days and weeks, we have come to understand that the situation may be worse than we thought"

The (ICAE's) recommendation that: "along with his advisory committee (SAC), Wangoola adopt the position that they welcome an external audit led by SIDA and supported by DVV and NORAD and that this be communicated forthwith to SIDA, DVV and NORAD" was disclosed. He further said that they (ICAE) recognised that the allegations were quite serious and that they were far beyond poor management decisions.

The International Council for Adult Education supported the need for an external audit and "an open, serious and transparent process".[48] With such strong calls for an external audit, the last thing the secretary general would have wanted to do was to go on nine months leave as proposed by the AALAE programme officers.[49]

References & Endnotes/Chap 9

46. Letter by the Director of IIZ/DVV to Paul Wangoola, dated 07.05.1996.
47. The Africa Regional Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ARCACE). A Concept Paper in respect of the formation of ARCACE had been prepared and widely circulated.
48. Letter by Raymond Des Rochers, Executive Director of ICAE to Hans Persson, Programme Officer, Education Division, Department for Democracy and Social Development, dated Thursday, June 20, 1996. (Sent by E-Mail).
49. See Request for an Independent Investigative Audit of the Financial and Administrative Affairs of AALAE.

Donors create dictators. They should instead facilitate for positive change.

Mukaru Ng'ang'a

10

THE AUDIT: RATIONALE AND SCOPE

The Agreements of Cooperation signed between AALAE and the donors and partners make provision for audits. For example the NORAD-AALAE Agreement states:

> *NORAD reserves the right to appoint an independent auditor to undertake an external audit as a matter of routine, or in cases where NORAD deems it necessary. NORAD further reserves the right to carry out independent reviews or evaluations of the project as a matter of routine as and when NORAD deems it necessary.*[50]

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) also made provision in the Agreement of Cooperation with AALAE for audit. The Agreement provides that:

> *Partner institutions shall permit IIZ/DVV at any time, to examine its accounting records in full or in part. Such examination may be conducted by a person authorized by IIZ/DVV. All such records and documentation must be maintained for a period of at least five years...*

Inspite of the fact that the annual audit had been done as a legal requirement and a financial management process, the recklessness which characterised financial administration continued with impunity. Laws, internal rules and procedures, and 'systems' of accountability were violated. Systems and control mechanisms were glaringly inadequate or lacking. Overspending became a favourite passtime. Lack of discipline to meet reporting deadlines in conformity with the provisions of funding Agreements was an organisational habit, and queries by the auditors were contemptuously dismissed by the finance officer; the treasurer's complaints went unheeded, and programme officers were not involved in financial matters, which were shrouded in top secrecy.

The Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee were kept at bay and those members who appeared to be critical were "crucified". Absolute lack of checks and balances and utter disregard for rules and procedures paved the way to AALAE's undoing.

But elsewhere the secretary general was ostensibly critical of others; those who recall the infamous ICAE Crisis which ended with the ouster of the erstwhile secretary general would never cease to wonder. The ICAE Crisis could pass for a sunday school picnic judging from the monstrosity that had passed for organisational mismanagement in AALAE.[51]

Preparing for the Audit

When it appeared that an external audit was a possibility, a number of consultations were held between the chairman of AALAE and the secretary general. The secretary general took action to commission "an audit" to ***clean up AALAE's financial mess***. David Nyende and John Kañanda were requested "to study the relevant documentation at AALAE and provide a professional opinion and advice on the finance and management situation at AALAE". They were given the following terms of reference:

1. Study the audited accounts for 1990 - 1995 and related auditors reports.
2. Analyse financial inflows for 1990 -1995 with the view of establishing the quantum of grants which were flexible or available for core funding.
3. Study the secretary general's reports on the state of the organisation and financial situation, as well as other relevant documents.
4. Look at the action taken at various levels to stem the deteriorating situation.
5. Look into any other matter you deem necessary to achieve the objectives of this exercise.
6. On the basis of 1 - 4 above:
    (i) Analyse and locate the problems.
    (ii) Make suggestions on possible ways out of the crisis.

The letter further stated:

> *"To assist you undertake the tasks, financial and related documents, programme and donor files will be made available to you by Messrs Alaoy and James Githongo. You may also talk to/interview the members of staff, or seek information from any other sources you deem fit and necessary for this exercise."*[52]

It should be noted that the decision to appoint Messrs John Kananda and David Nyende was not taken on the advice of the SAC, of which Kananda is a member in addition to being a member of the Board of Trustees and the financial advisor to the secretary general.

'Professional' Opinion on the Management and Financial Situation at AALAE

David Nyende's interim report dated May 4, 1996 (Kananda's name does not appear on the report) says that:

> *"This interim report has been prepared to address the urgent issue of how the secretariat of AALAE can continue to operate, at least nominally, while a lasting solution to the present financial constraints is sought..."*

In other words Nyende's preoccupation was a provisional "rescue" plan for running the secretariat upto December, 1996.

In his comments and observations on what he called "burning issues", he challenged "the widely held view that the organisation's true financial situation was known by only one or two people (the finance and administration officer and, perhaps the secretary general)".

On cheques signatures he says that,

> *The S.G. and F/AO are categorised panel "A" cheques signatories i.e. both cannot sign a cheque together. Panel "B" signatories are the chairman of SAC, the treasurer and AALAE's financial advisor.*

What Nyende failed to say is that, one of the cheques' signatory is also one of the appointed "auditors" who doubled up as "AALAE's financial advisor". The Constitution of AALAE does not provide for such a post (financial advisor). Neither the General Assembly nor the Executive Council elected or appointed one. The appointment of Kananda as an "auditor" was irregular as he cannot audit himself. What is his constitutional mandate?

Nyende further states that:

> *"So far, there is No clear-cut evidence that financial information was deliberately withheld by F/AO to those constitutionally entitled to it".*

But according to the treasurer of AALAE, who was elected by the General Assembly,

> *"Ever since the birth of AALAE, [1984] no comments or recommendations from auditors have been brought to my attention or that of the Executive Committee to the best of my knowledge.*
>
> *When I insisted on being given copies of the auditors comments since my attention was drawn to them, I never got any except the 1995 comments. These comments show serious lapses on the part of the financial administrator and the secretary general on either taking action on the recommendations made or drawing the attention of the treasurer, the Secretariat Advisory Committee or even presumably the chairman of AALAE, on the serious issues raised by the auditors.*

> *The finance administrator's explanation at the SAC meeting of 21st May, 1996 was that he failed to bring them to my attention and that of the Executive Committee because he felt these were technical comments meant for his attention and action; action which he never took. He gave no satisfactory reasons."*

Did David Nyende interview the treasurer? If he did not, why?

He states that staff "do not get access to meaningful financial information to be in a position to know the financial position of the organisation". This statement is being economical with the truth. The truth is that staff, programme officers included, never got financial information even that which pertained to their programmes. Did Nyende interview the programme officers? If he did not, why? Was it or was it not necessary to interview them?

He states further that:

> *"One gets the impression that the governing organs of the organization had confidence in the leadership of the secretariat to deal with the financial situation satisfactorily, the financial information was taken to be for information only".*

Presumptuous man! What is the evidence? There is no room for impressionistic statements in an exercise of this nature. The Constitution of AALAE mandates the Executive Council "to have general supervision of the finances of the Association, and to receive annual reports and audited statements of accounts..." How can the Executive Council play this role when it does not meet because "there is no money"? The Executive Council has not met since 1993! What does "confidence in the leadership of the secretariat" mean?

On financial mismanagement and misappropriation he gives an explanation of the terms "mismanagement" and "misappropriation".

To mismanage is to manage incompetently or dishonestly.

To misappropriate is to apply wrongly or dishonestly.

Both words "mismanagement" and "misappropriation" imply dishonesty. (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English language)

> *"Misappropriation" is "when someone belonging to an organization uses its money for their own purposes".*[53]

There is evidence that the secretary general of AALAE had used programme funds on *Mpambo* of which Mr. Nyende has been invited to be Treasurer.[54]

Nyende goes on to opine that "financial mismanagement doesn't stop with one person handling finances illegally. It goes as far as, for example, the Board failing to take strategic decisions in time, debtors/donors failing to remit funds in time, bad financial reporting, wrong financial decisions, utilising funds for wrong programmes,

"

But donors cannot remit funds when funds previously remitted have not been accounted for and the funding Agreements have been breached. When the finance officer deducted moneys from the salaries of staff members in respect of PAYE and then fails to remit such statutory deductions to the Income Tax Department, should the Executive Council be held responsible? When the auditors' reports and queries in respect of failure to remit statutory deductions were concealed from the Executive Council, where does the blame lie?

These are obvious cases for comments because the Auditor's reports are available. Nyende's starting point should have been the Auditor's reports, moving from the known on to the unknown.

On Donor Confidence

The report stated that,

> *"In the absence of corroborated evidence, the consultant is unable at this stage to accept the view that there is lost donor confidence in the organisation".*

And further that:

> *"The Executive Council has not met since 1993. The same with the General Assembly. The reasons are lack of funds to finance such meetings".*
>
> *"SAC, although members are Nairobi - based did not meet until October 1995 since its last meeting in July 1993".*

The last time the General Assembly met was in 1990 in the Island of Mauritius. The 1993 meeting did not take place notwithstanding that US $ 1million was available.

The auditor should have investigated the reasons for SAC's failure to meet inspite of the fact that all the members are based in Nairobi and in close proximity to the AALAE secretariat. Did the "auditor" ever interview the members of SAC? Did he read the letters from the donors and partners on financial reporting. What is his basis for stating that there is no lost donor confidence?

There were speculation that SAC was put in a sack because of its apparent criticism of certain administrative matters at its emergency meeting of 15th July 1993. According to the minutes of the meeting:

> *"The secretary general requested an emergency meeting of SAC to consider and advise on the serious financial situation which had 'abruptly' emerged in the Association."*

At that meeting, SAC expressed concern "about the laxity with which the non-renewal of staff contracts was handled as well as the way in which personal files were kept". Except for three members of staff, including the secretary general, "copies of contracts had disappeared from the files".

The disappearance of staff contracts from the files strangely coincided with the secretary general's proposal for staff reduction by a whooping 50%. It was that meeting which advised that five members of staff be laid off because there was a "serious financial situation which had abruptly emerged".

In 1993 AALAE received over one million US dollars. If with that amount of money AALAE had a "serious financial situation", when would the financial situation not be serious? The writing was on the wall, but the unsuspecting members of SAC failed to use their literacy skills. Early 1996, the services of the last programme officer Alaoy were terminated and three other members of staff were asked to proceed on "unpaid leave".[55]

Alaoy was accused of operating in direct competition with his employer, an accusation which is ridiculous given that Paul Wangoola lists himself as secretary of *Mpambo*. Is that competition with AALAE or something even worse?[56] Justice has indeed gone to brutish beast! Alaoy's exit brings to thirteen the number of people who have been forced out of the AALAE secretariat, albeit irregularly, since 1993. The AALAE secretariat is, as at July 8 1996 staffed by three persons - the secretary general, the finance officer and a secretary. The original plot is on stage!

Focus of the Audit

The question which the audit should address is not whether money was spent, but how it was spent. The issues to be addressed are constitutional, legal, programmatic, managerial (systems and procedures), as well as membership participation in the affairs of AALAE.

References & Endnotes/Chap 10

50. Contract signed between the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education on 7th November 1994, p.3.

51. For information on the ICAE crisis read *The Spider* (the Newsletter of AALAE) and ICAE reports.

52. Letter titled: "Request for a professional opinion on the management and financial situation at AALAE" dated 14th April, 1996.

53. Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language 1989 edn. Published by Portland House, New York.

    Harrap's Essential English Dictionary. Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd. 1995.

54. Letter dated 16th May 1996 Referenced 701.2.3. The secretary general of AALAE, listed as secretary of *Mpambo*, invited Dr. Antony Setsabi, the Chairman of AALAE to be the Vice Chair of *Mpambo*, Mr Nyende was invited to be the Treasurer.

Mpambo is a major cause for AALAE's demise.

55. Letters to Robinson Nyacharo and Ben Abuya requesting them to "proceed on unpaid leave until after the report of the Investigative Audit is released".

Alaoy, a programme officer, had his service terminated because he had been "in total disregard of an order by the Secretariat Advisory Committee, not to make known specified information pertaining to the business or affairs of the employer".

He was also accused of participating in a conference in Jordan not as programme officer of AALAE but as a "Task Force Coordinator" of the Africa Regional Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ARCACE).

A further accusation was that (you) have set up yourself in direct competition with your employer....."

56. Paul Wangoola, secretary general's letter of 16th May 1996 inviting a list of people "to be on the Board" of *Mpambo*. He designates himself as secretary.

His eloquence that is the tool of his trade is but a veneer that conceals his bestiality and primitivity. The murderous consequences of his political actions in Uganda are still with us

Ugandan Adult Educator

11

Summing Up The Issues

Corruption and Mismanagement in the Affairs of AALAE

The Centre for Law and Research International (CLARION) in the study *The Anatomy of Corruption: Legal, Political and Socio-economic Perspectives*[57] has reviewed available literature on the subject "corruption" in an effort to come up with some definition. There appears to be two major foci in the definition of corruption viz public office and public interest. Corruption is said to happen when a public office, which accords power and authority to the occupant, is used for personal gain against public interest. According to Stanislav Andreski, corruption

> *"designates the practice of using the power of office for making private gain in breach of laws and regulations nominally in force."*[58]

Demeanour and conduct which are prejudicial to the rights of others can be described as corrupt. Another dimension of corruption is the wrongful exercise of authority. In a summary of the characteristics of corruption, Syed Hussein Alatas mentions betrayal of trust, deliberate subordination of common interests to specific interests, secrecy in the conduct of public affairs and nepotism as some of the characteristics of corruption. To Syed Hussein Alatas' list of characteristics can be added lack of integrity. Machiavelli refers to integrity as virtue.

Corruption in the conduct of the affairs of African NGOs is a problem which is causing tremendous concern and anxiety. Being microcosms of the state, African NGOs are not immune to corruption because they operate in an inherently corrupt environment. Many NGO leaders were at one time or another state bureaucrats and political party operatives and power brokers. Ex-politicians and civil servants who preponderate NGO leadership hardly make good managers.

While some NGOs were created by the state, there are others which exist in the image of the state, and are part of the state structure. There are instances where NGOs become "wings" of the political parties in power in a number of African countries. The state - NGO nexus, therefore, breeds corruption in a number of instances.

Another reason for corruption is poverty which manifests itself in lack of money and material resources. Lack of character, the combination to these qualities which positively make up a person's personality, is yet another manifestation of poverty. The majority of NGO leaders cannot be said to be poor in material and money terms given their high salaries and favourable conditions of service, but many are poor in character and it is this poverty of character which is against public interest. The problem of poverty of character lies in the socialisation of the individual; habits die hard and have become second nature. Eradicating, or alleviating or ameliorating poverty of character becomes a monumental task. Someone recently described an NGO leader who is given to sensual pleasures as a savage. That description bespeaks poverty of character. In the NGO domain, character is of essence given the nature of NGO work and the methods which they are expected to employ to accomplish their objectives.

At a just concluded conference on corruption in Copenhagen, Denmark, it was revealed, by one speaker that, "even Africans who had good jobs in Denmark were corrupt".[59]

Governments in Africa and in other parts of the world have been making strenuous efforts to address the problem of bureaucratic (white collar) corruption. The justification for the anti-corruption efforts and measures lie in the fact that development cannot and will not take place in a corrupt environment . A corrupt environment breeds corruption. Poverty and corruption lead to social disintegration, civil strife and the collapse of civil society. Many African countries which have socially, politically and economically disintegrated were characterized by high levels of official corruption - Zaire, Liberia, Uganda(before NRM) Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia to mention a few. Official corruption has been the major cause of civil wars in Africa.

At the international level, action to stem corruption has been taken by the United Nations (UN), International Development Agencies (IDAs), and governments. In 1989, for example, a major conference on corruption took place at the Hague, Netherlands. One year earlier in 1988, an international study group on corruption held its first in a series of Anti-Corruption Conferences. The fifth was held in 1992. The conferences were held in Washington, New York, Hong Kong, Sydney and Amsterdam.

A seminar on "Corruption, Democracy and Human Rights in East and Central Africa" was held at the Lake Victoria Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda, from 12 - 14 December 1994. It was organised by the Africa Leadership Forum in collaboration with Transparency International and was supported by the European Commission. Participants were drawn from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, Ghana, Burundi, Nigeria, a number of European countries, and the United States of America. A former President of Nigeria who is also chairman of the Africa Leadership Forum, and a former President of Burundi, also participated.

The seminar focused on "the causes and effects of corruption in Africa, the ways in which businessmen from developed countries deepen the crisis, and the way in which civil society in particular might mobilize to combat it effectively".[60]

The seminar did not address NGO/civil society corruption which has now emerged as a major focus of study. It has been argued that civil society cannot combat corruption when it is itself corrupt. It would have no moral justification to do so.

The papers which were presented at the seminar included the following:

- Effects of Corruption on Development
- Economic Development and Corruption
- Effects of Corruption on Democracy
- Corruption and its effects on Human Rights
- Mass Media and Campaign Against Corruption
- Corruption in Africa: The Role of Transparency International.

The November 14, 1994 edition of *Newsweek Magazine* addressed the problem of corruption in the context of economic growth. It argued that economic growth in particular and development in general will be hamstrung in a corrupt environment. Given the roles which both public and private institutions play in development, attention ought to be focused not only on large - scale corruption at the level of the state and public institutions but also on corruption in civil society, particularly in NGOs. They (NGOs) should be targeted for investigation and analysis. Over the years NGOs have been playing important developmental roles and use resources which many argue are beyond their capacity to manage. The case of AALAE is important here.

A number of legal, administrative and other measures have been taken by African governments to "fight" corruption. In Uganda, there is an anti corruption outfit called the Inspector General of Government. In Kenya there is legislation against corruption in the form of the Prevention of Corruption Act. In Sierra Leone which was an infamous "haven" for corruption, there was a military coup in 1992 which was followed by commissions of enquiry into corruption in both the public and private sectors. These commissions have left many former big shots in government and quasi - governmental organisations in jail and dispossessed of their loot, although to a large extent they are seen to be the incubent government' s public relation arms given that high level corruption still prevails unabated.

The Danish Government is reported to be spending a lot of money to "help fight corruption" in Africa.[61]

The Contexts of Corruption

It is generally believed that corruption thrives in developing countries for a number of reasons which include "cultural" behaviour and practices, patrimonial authority structures, grinding poverty, low salaries and wages (wages unto death), corrupt judicial and legal systems, unemployment, high population growth, low agricultural and industrial production among others. Put together, these factors constitute a vicious cycle which is difficult to break.[62]

It is widely believed that NGOs are becoming breeding grounds for corruption, and that a combination of factors account for this unwholesome situation. These can be categorised as legal, historical, systemic, cultural, psychosocial, programmatic, operational and personal.

Legal

Although NGOs operate within a legal framework made up by the law of the land and the constitutions and Bye-Laws of NGOs, violations are, in general, taken as normal. This has to do with the culture of corruption which characterizes the environment in which the NGOs operate. The example of AALAE is important here. Although the Income Tax Act has been violated with impunity by the finance officer, and the Auditors called attention to the acts of violation, nothing was done to redress the wrong or to punish the wrongdoer. When attention was called to the fact that the Law was being violated the response was, "this is Kenya", whatever that means.

A cursory glance at the constitutions of many NGOs would reveal the source or sources of the enormous problems of mismanagement and abuse of authority with which they have to grapple. The constitutions are characterised by lacunae - too many rooms for manoeuvre which make them prone to violation. In the AALAE constitution the powers and functions of the elected officers are not defined - little wonder therefore that the duties of the Treasurer were usurped resulting in her disempowerment, marginalisation and redundancy. With many constitutional rooms for manoeuvre, a smart alec would waste no time in exploiting the loopholes to his or her advantage and quickly metamorphose into a dictator. Constitutions are not meant to "freeze reality" they are or ought to be a reflection of reality but when a constitution becomes the servant instead of the master of reality that is a recipe for anomie.

Systemic

Workable systems are glaringly absent in NGOs which have developed a culture of their own and sadly this is a culture which seems to be at variance with time-tested management principles. Boards of management are replete with praise singers and sychophants, many of whom hardly understand the nature and purpose of development or the objectives of the NGOs which they purport to manage. Elections at General Assemblies or annual meetings are flawed and result in incompetents being "elected". Many "professionals" who espouse and propound values of democracy and good governance get compromised in the shortest possible time by executive directors and chief executives who have a propensity to and inclination for corrupt practices. Those who speak up are crucified and stand the risk of not being re-elected. Nepotism and tribalism become the rule rather than the exception. Results of investigations are academic exercises which are not even discussed by the Boards. Millions are lost in shaddy deals.

The case of the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) is important here. The Report on the Investigations on Accounting Systems and Procedures for year the ended 31st December 1994 was done on the basis of the following terms of reference.

1. Determine appropriateness of accounting system and identify anomalies and questionable deals.
2. Assessment of accounting procedures, recordings, payment vouchers, cash in hand, expenditure and cheque disbursements.
3. Assessing bank transactions in relation to payments and expenditure.
4. Interviews with clients and FEMNET staff with respect to financial transactions.
5. Advise on ways FEMNET can better manage her financial resources.

6a. Investigate allegations on delays in payment.

6b. 10% deals in transactions between FEMNET and clients.

6c. Deals in foreign currency transactions.

6d. Deals relating to the rent of FEMNET's current premises.

6e. Deals relating to the procurement of *Kiondos* (baskets) for the Dakar conference.

The findings of that investigation called for action which is yet to be taken by the FEMNET Board and therefore those found wanting have not been called to account.[63] The secretary general of AALAE is a member of this Board.

Another development organisation which has had very serious management problems (occasioned by weak or non-existent management systems) is INADES FORMATION Kenya. This organisation has in fact wound up leaving behind a tragedy of maldevelopment.[64] Lack of commitment coupled with unprofessional conduct are at the root of the African NGO problem.

Historical

The history of NGOs and the nature of voluntarism by which many are characterised, in general, make them what they are. Historically, many NGOs were founded by individuals who had a variety of motives, including those who were fired by the spirit of service and philanthropy. These are either very few now, endangered, or they are altogether extinct. Founders of NGOs have regarded the organisations as theirs and have called or tried to call the shots irrespective of established norms of organisational behaviour. Founder organisations have not developed into "legal -rational systems", if one is to use Max Weber's typology. They have remained patrimonial in form and essence.

The voluntary nature of NGOs has been both an advantage and a disadvantage in terms of sustainability and and lack of professional management. Volunteers have, by and large, sustained NGOs in terms of giving them life; NGOs have survived because of the voluntary disposition of their members. However, voluntarism which is not accompanied by professionalism tends to handicap the recipient organisation in a number of ways. Volunteers come and go; submitting to the culture of the organisation in terms of its discipline becomes a tall order.

The author has argued elsewhere[65] that in times of harsh economic realities, like the times we are in, one cannot talk about voluntarism which, in this context, is the provision of free service. This argument is tenable because it is supported by the experiences of many NGOs especially those whose remit is adult education and literacy. Irregular attendance and absenteeism at Board meetings are problems especially in cases where the travel and subsistence costs of the Board members are not met by the organisation. Many "volunteers" expect pecuniary benefits in return for their services. When meetings do not take place because they are inchoate due to persistent absenteeism collective decision making is impossible. A situation of absenteeism is likely to create a breeding ground for dictators.

For NGOs like the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education whose Board members are widely dispersed throughout Africa, attendance at meetings becomes an immediate problem. The AALAE Executive Council has not met since 1993, because "there is no money" to convene meetings. Even the SAC which is a Nairobi-based committee did not meet between 1993 and October 1995. The Board of Trustees of AALAE has not met, it is said, since its election in 1987 notwithstanding that all its members, except two, are resident in Nairobi.

Democratic management of organisations which profess democracy and lay claim to a democratic way of life are a ridicule in terms of what they practice. When the elected boards do not meet, a chief executive officer, who could be an unwilling convert to democracy and has a penchant for authoritarianism, will seize power with alacrity.

The AALAE crisis has adequately demonstrated how democracy can be abused and ridiculed when there is lack of professionalism and over-voluntarism. In his interim report on "Management and Financial Situation at AALAE" David Nyende states:

> *The EXCO [Executive Council] has not met since 1993. The same with the General Assembly. The reasons are lack of funds to finance such meetings.*
>
> *SAC, [Secretariat Advisory Committee] although members are Nairobi-based, did not meet until October 1995 since its last meeting in July 1993.*
>
> *The failure of the governing organs to hold formal meetings leaves the secretariat lonely without assurances that their actions and programmes are approved.*[96]

It should also be pointed out that a chief executive who does not have propensity for unilateral or dictatorial action would have made efforts to, at least, consult with the members of the Executive Council who are in close geographical and physical proximity to the AALAE secretariat in Nairobi. Upto seven members of the Executive Council, in addition to the secretary general who is also an ex-officio member, are within easy reach and could have been summoned in an emergency meeting to deliberate on the critical situation in AALAE. The members of the Secretariat Advisory Committee could have joined them to form an Executive Council - cum - Secretariat Advisory Committee Consultative Group. That would have been acceptable given the exigencies of the secretariat in particular and the Association in general. The following members of the Executive Council and the Secretariat Advisory Committee could have been available for a meeting at very little or no cost to AALAE. The meeting could have been held in Nairobi or in Uganda where the chairman of AALAE was resident at the time. Travelling by road could have been a possibility, and those coming from outside Kenya or Uganda, if either was the venue for the meeting could have been hosted by members of AALAE and members of staff of the secretariat. That was the case in October 1995 when the chairman was the guest of the secretary general, and in another instance when the vice chairman was the guest of one of the programme officers.

List of Executive Council members who could have been invited to an emergency meeting to discuss the AALAE Crisis.

Name	*Status in AALAE*	*Country of Residence*
1. Dr. Anthony Sets'abi	Chair of AALAE	Uganda (1994 - 1996)
2. Mr. Anthony Okech	Vice Chair	Uganda
3. Mrs Mary Opiyo	Treasurer	Kenya
4. Mr. David K. Kirui	Chair of SAC Chair, Board of Trustees	Kenya

Name	*Status in AALAE*	*Country of Residence*
5. Dr. Joyce Mangvwat	Member	Kenya
6. Mr. Paul Wangoola	Member	Kenya
7. Mrs Bernadette Fumbuka	Member	Tanzania
8. Mrs Catherine Boyoya	Member	Burundi

The Executive Council consists of seventeen members. A meeting of eight out of seventeen (47%) would have been justified in view of the emergency and very difficult circumstances the Association was facing. (See list of AALAE's Executive Council members in Annexure 5.)

List of Secretariat Advisory Committee Members

Name	*Status in AALAE*	*Country of Residence*
Mr. David A. Kirui	Chair	Kenya
Mrs Mary Opiyo	Treasurer	Kenya
Mr. Jeconiah Odumbe	Member	Kenya
Mr. John Kananda	Member	Kenya

Major decisions which were taken by the secretary general, including the decisions to terminate the services of the two programme officers, appoint auditors, and send three other staff numbers on unpaid leave, could have been referred to or taken in consultation with the elected officials of AALAE.

The Constitution of *AALAE* and the Personnel Policies do not give the secretary general authority to act in that respect. Even in consultation with the chairman of AALAE it was unconstitutional to terminate the services of the programme officers and "appoint" auditors. The decision to appoint David Nyende as "auditor" was also questionable given his relationship with the secretary general, and the financial implications. Offering to pay US $ 7,000 for an "audit" when there was neither money to pay staff salaries or to convene an Executive Council meeting was very poor judgement.

Nyende's appointment was also fraught with ethical problems. He had been invited by the secretary general to be the treasurer of *Mpambo*, a business initiative which is a major factor in the demise of AALAE. Many people have therefore questioned Nyende's professional independence and integrity when he accepted the offer to undertake the "audit".

Bad Governance

Many African countries are emerging from single party dictatorships which have left in their trail mass pauperisation, economic and social disintegration, environmental degradation, civil wars and mass graves. The fledgling democracies are expected to come to terms with the monstrous and horrendous past through efforts of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction not only in terms of physical infrastructure but also in terms of healing the national body politic and psyche. The "spirit of the people" is also in need of healing.

Civil society has emerged as a bulwark of the process of democratic transformation. NGOs are part and parcel of the neo-civil society movement, but alas, many of the NGOs and other civil society groups are pseudo and constitute a bigger threat to democracy and good governance. The AALAE experience evidences the dangers in which Africa stands.

AALAE had tremendous goodwill and support both moral, material and financial so that it could contribute in a significant way to alleviating the problem of illiteracy which is part of the causes of Africa's under-development. Africa is virtually illiterate and with illiteracy, democracy limps on one leg. AALAE's mandate has been abused by the very people who were elected to provide leadership at the executive council and secretariat levels. The apparent passivity of the membership has contributed in no small way to the general failure of AALAE in promoting authentic literacy and adult education on the African continent. To this day majority of the members of AALAE are sitting on the fence. Not a word has been uttered!

The task of eradicating illiteracy is one which calls not only for financial and other resources but good management without which financial resources, however plentiful would be inadequate. It is estimated that over 1995 there were 885 million illiterate youth and adults aged 15 years and over. We are informed that, "over the same period, sub-sahara Africa and the Arab States have increased the world's illiterate population by six million, of which 80% are women".[67] Here lies the challenge, the mandate and task which can hardly be accomplished without sound management.

The AALAE story is a reflection of what happens in many African NGOs although the difference, if there is, will be in degree rather than form. The NGO Code of Conduct will hopefully contribute to good governance in NGOs given its legal prescriprion which includes,

> *Probity - "the exercise of responsibility, accountability, trustworthiness and integrity;*
>
> *respect - "the recognition of the rights, dignity and potentiality of others".*

The Code provides that in the observance of probity, an organisation shall:

a) perform its duties incorruptibly;

b) at all times avoid any conflict between official and private interests;

f) be honest and impartial in all dealings with people.

An organisation is enjoined to observe justice by practicing "fairness and equality in all its operations, and to adhere to and uphold the rule of law".

Lack of Respect for the Law

The law rules. Good governance at whatever level depends on respect for and observance of the law. Breach of the law should be accompanied by punishment to deter further breach. In the case of AALAE wrongdoing and breach of the law became the rule rather than the exception. The Constitution of AALAE has been violated; the Laws of Kenya have been breached, namely, the Income Tax Act, the Employment Act and the NGO Act and Code of Conduct. Mechanisms including the NGO council, for ensuring good governance and respect for the rule of law seem to be ineffective.

Unethical Behaviour

Ethics concern what is considered to be right and proper behaviour of those who hold public office. It was unethical for the chair of AALAE, who was elected to provide exemplary leadership to the Association, to keep quiet when his attention was drawn to the facts of the crisis.[68] Ethics provide the foundation for accountability. Neither the chairman of AALAE, nor the secretary general took action to inform the members of the Executive Council and the members of AALAE that a crisis existed. It was after the crisis had reached monstrous proportions that the secretary general wrote a memorandum dated 3rd June 1996 to the members of the Executive Council and the membership of AALAE on the subject "Allegations by Messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE". This was eight months after the emergence of the real crisis, and twenty four months after the first indication that AALAE was facing a financial crisis. The purpose of that letter was ostensibly to blame Thompson and Alaoy for calling attention to the crisis. It was not, in any way, to account to the membership.

Olowu and Rasheed rightly state that,

> *The concept and practice of accountability is expected to make public officials responsible for their actions or inactions.*[69]

Primordial Loyalties

It is argued that many African public officials find it difficult to distinguish between their responsibilities in a public (rational-legal) organisation and their primordial loyalties in patrimonial systems. Modern organisations cannot be managed in a patrimonial mode as is the case with AALAE, where for example, constructive criticism and expression of alternative views are seen as seditious and punishable by burning at the stake. Demand for information was viewed as heresy; transparency was a fetish. There are universal values and virtues of modern management which ought to be internalised and imbibed. Uncivilised public conduct cannot be tolerated, and ought to be resisted.

AALAE is a regional organisation and staff appointments, for example, should demonstrate the organisation's regional character. Appointing people from only one country is unacceptable however "qualified" they might be. The practice of appointing Ugandans to undertake tasks in AALAE has been criticised by the members of AALAE because there are qualified people of other nationalities (Kenyans, Tanzanians, Ethiopians) who are in close geographical proximity to the Nairobi secretariat, if cost is a criterion. The secretary general gives the names of six Ugandans whom he describes as "personages in their own country" who have undertaken very important assignments in AALAE. We know these Ugandans and we respect them for their high level professionalism, integrity and above all modesty. But appointing another Ugandan who is considered to be part of the AALAE problem to undertake an internal audit was unacceptable for a number of reasons which for emphasis and reinforcement will be restated.

- First, Nyende is a friend of the secretary general.
- Second, he hails from the same place in Uganda as Paul Wangoola.
- Third, he is the treasurer designate of *Mpambo*, the factor for AALAE's demise.
- Fourth, the task of audit was too critical and politically charged to be undertaken by another Ugandan; what is more it is a task which requires not only high profile qualification but professional independence.
- Fifth the appointment was unconstitutional: The secretary general does not have the constitutional authority to appoint auditors not even the Executive Council has - that authority rests in the General Assembly alone.
- Sixth, the offer to pay US $ 7,000 for an audit at a time when staff salaries had not been paid for three months was questionable.
- Seventh, the external auditors had just completed the annual audit (in February) and were about to submit their report. Previous audit reports had drawn attention to financial and administrative

irregularities which had been largely ignored. What was needed therefore was not another audit but action to implement the previous auditors' recommendations.

It was not surprising therefore that Nyende's interim report maintains a loud silence on the external auditors' draft report for 1995 which had been released before his report was issued. In fact it was the quantum of the deficit report by the Auditors which necessitated the request for professional opinion, a euphemism for audit. The speculation therefore that the "audit" was part of the strategy to cover up was not frivolous.

The secretary general's ideology of meritocracy in the appointment of consultants did not extend to the finance department of AALAE which is responsible for the financial mess. Had a competent Kenyan been appointed, AALAE would have been saved this traumatic and disgraceful experience.

Members of AALAE have also questioned the practice of taking most programmes to Uganda, and to Jinja District in particular. Uganda has had more than its fair share of AALAE programmes as the following table shows:

AALAE programmes implemented in Uganda between 1990 and 1995

Name of programme	*Donor*	*Places of implementation*
Technical Assistance Project (TAP)	PAC	Liberia, Kenya, UGANDA
Learners Empowerment Programme	NORAD	Kenya, UGANDA, Madagascar, South Africa
Eco Volunteers Project	ELCI	UGANDA
Development Partnerships	UNDP	Kenya, UGANDA
University Networks	DVV	UGANDA
1995 Exchange Programme	Various	Kenya, UGANDA

The decision on where to implement AALAE's programmes was not taken collectively either at the level of the staff meeting, or at the level of the Secretariat Advisory Committee or at the Executive Council level. The secretary general decided. *Mpambo* on which AALAE programme funds had been spent, is also being implemented in Jinja, Uganda.

Mismanagement

That the affairs of AALAE have been mismanaged has been proved beyond reasonable doubt. Lack of respect for the provisions of the constitution, the internal rules and procedures and the law of the land has largely contributed to mismanagement. The governing organs have been kept at bay on the spurious reason of lack of money. In their absence the secretary general has ruled the Association oblivious of the fact that participation of the members of staff in general and the programme officers in particular was an essential ingredient in sound decision making. In his absolute rule he exceeded his constitutional authority and created a crisis.

High Centralisation and Lack of Participation

At a time when the issue of participation was high on the agenda and when calls were being made for decentralisation of management structures and processes, AALAE was going against the tide by taking action to increase the level of centralisation. Discussions on decentralisation became academic exercises because there was neither belief in the principle of decentralisation nor political commitment to make decentralisation happen. The location of the ICAE Women Network Programme and the crisis which it generated is a case in point.

Most of the decisions with regard to programmes, the Bulawayo Women's Programme for example, were not only made by the secretary general, they were implemented with his participation which, by and large, contributed to determining the outputs and outcomes. Those who participated had to have his blessing. Since the majority of the participants were not the real representatives of the member Associations of AALAE, on their return home, very little or absolutely nothing was done to translate the recommendations and decisions into actions on the ground. For many of those "participants", "participation" was a touristic opportunity and an adventure in tinkering with adult education. In almost all of the countries from which participants came, NOTHING is happening. Absolutely nothing!

Lack of participation of the members of AALAE became a critical issue which was never addressed. The Networks which had a potential for participation of the membership were scrapped inspite of the Evaluator's Report which indicated the desire of the members that they be continued albeit in a restructured format. The Networks were scrapped because they were becoming centres of excellence and autonomy. They were therefore seen as a threat.

Dictatorial Style of Leadership

Leadership style in the AALAE secretariat and at the level of the Executive Council has been described as dictatorial. Dictatorship manifested itself in lack of real consultation in decision making, lack of regular staff meetings, absence of the Executive Council, the Secretariat Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees. Staff meetings, for example, were few and far between. They were actually called *barazas* which were summoned at very short notice for the imposition of decisions made elsewhere. Espionage in the AALAE secretariat was a familiar mode of "management" and was accompanied by top secrecy in the handling of financial matters. The AALAE secretariat had become a police state in nature, form and essence, and the activities of the *gestapo* would make *Ivan the Terrible* jump in his grave with exhilaration.

Mismatch Between Rhetoric and Reality

To many, AALAE was seen as an organisation which was at the vanguard in the struggle for social justice, authentic development and democracy. The writings and speeches of the secretary general, albeit combative and cold warrior-like, bear testimony to this perception. However, words outside of the AALAE secretariat did not match with the reality within. It was a fine facade which was rotten inside. Outsiders, the unsuspecting, the sycophants, and willing dupes would not have felt the effects of the tyranny that was unleashed by the finance officer and the secretary general. "We suffered in that place but unflinching in our resolve to bring about change; the time for change is now!" All those who voted with their feet, and they are many in Kenya, would testify to the false representation of the AALAE reality. That was a false reality!

The ICAE Crisis

An example of the mismatch between rhetoric and reality is the ICAE Crisis. The position of AALAE, which was well articulated as usual, was a position which was in favour of representation, participation and democratisation. There was an information overload on the crisis as efforts were made across the globe to provide information and present the rich variety of perspectives on the nature of the crisis and how it could be resolved. Someone described the information explosion as "dance of the faxes"[70]

In the case of the AALAE Crisis there was a deliberate attempt and strident efforts to hush-hush. Not only was the chairman of AALAE not speaking, it became sacrilegious to provide information on the crisis. The problem with AALAE is that there has been a lack of information at best or a distortion or disinformation at worse. The crisis got out of hand simply because requests for information were treated with contempt and those who requested information became sinners who should be stoned to death.

When in July 1993 a crisis was announced by the secretary general no one bothered to determine its nature, cause, and extent. When in July 1995 senior members of staff were told that there was a serious financial crisis looming they requested information on its nature, but instead of getting information they received threats about the imminent closure of the secretariat and the sacking of staff. The finance officer's theatrics, for example, in demonstrating how they were going to shut down the secretariat would pass for an Oscar Award. The visual images which this narrative and narration evoke are already sending more shivers down the author's spine. Dishonesty, and deceit have tragically become strange pedagogy in adult education.

At the centre of the ICAE Crisis was "Power and Authority" of the elected, and appointed officials (the employees). In the AALAE's proposal on the ICAE Crisis the following questions were posed:

> *"What is the pecking order between the elected members of the Executive Council on the one hand and on the other employees of the Council?"*
>
> *"In case you believe that the elected members should give direction to the employees and appointed officers, how can the Executive Committee ensure that even when it is not in session it can always be felt?"*

A number of recommendations are made with regard to vision and mission, programmes, structure and organisation, leadership and resource mobilisation.

On leadership it is proposed that:

> *"appointed officers and employees shall be subject to the direction by the elected members of the Executive Committee," and that, "the secretary general should be appointed after due process".*

It was also recommended that "the head of ICAE secretariat shall be subject to a performance audit or appraisal". Those recommendations were coming from the secretary general of AALAE who is neither subject to the direction of the members of the Executive Council nor was he in office after due process of appointment, and had never been the subject of a performance audit and appraisal since 1985. The 1996 Investigative Audit, which has been occasioned partly by a lack of performance audit and appraisal, has come as a blessing for AALAE, as well as the African adult education movement.

The Request for an Independent Investigative Audit

When an independent investigative audit was requested for the secretary general and the finance officer reacted by issuing threats of termination. The threats were actually carried out resulting in the termination of J.D. Thompson's services in February, and subsequently that of Alaoy's in June 1996.

The attention of the chairman of AALAE was called to the fact that his secretary general was taking the organisation down the ravine. The chairman maintained silence because, according to Paul Wangoola "40% of communication in African languages is non-verbal". This criminal conspiracy of silence can be contrasted with the prompt responses of the donors, partners, ICAE and others.

Informed decisions cannot be made in the absence of information, definitely not in the age of the INTERNET or at a juncture when all resources are being harnessed to venture into the twenty-first century. Those who still live in the stone age may be forced into committing suicide.

During the ICAE crisis the chairman of AALAE communicated his thoughts on the crisis in writing. Hear what he said:

> *"I personally do not believe in accusations and counter accusations. Neither do I believe in legalistic and litigation processes as the best solutions. I believe in "win - win" solution where we are all winners and no one becomes an effective (or ineffective) loser."*[71]

That belief notwithstanding Alaoy and J.D. Thompson were threatened with a libel suit if they did not withdraw "false and libellous" allegations against the officers of AALAE, and tender unconditional apologies to AALAE and its officers.[72]

The secretary general's threat for legal action was taken cautiously inspite of clause 10 of the AALAE Personnel Policies which states that:

> *"An employee of AALAE by signing an AALAE's Employment Agreement covenants to settle all disputes outside the Courts of Law."*[73]

The value of transparency has become anathema and dissemination of information on mismanagement of the affairs of AALAE has become libellous allegations. That is yet to be proved beyond reasonable doubt. But meanwhile, the principle of collective responsibility makes accountability a moral imperative in AALAE. That management doctrine, the author believes, would stand for what was considered "false and libellous allegations".

References & Endnotes/Chap 11

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65. See, Ekundayo J.D. Thompson, Voluntarism and the management of NGOs: What are the Issues?

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    "Professionalisation of Adult Education."

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67. Education for All: Achieving the Goal. Working Document for the Mid-Decade Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All 16 -19 June 1996, Amman, Jordan.

68. See, Open Letter to the Chairman of AALAE by Ekundayo J.D. Thompson.

    See, "The AALAE Crisis: Facts and Figures" by Ekundayo J.D. Thompson.

69. Olowu D. and Rasheed S. (eds). Ethics and Accountability in African Public Services. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and African Association for Public Administration and Management. (n.d.)

70. See, memo dated 6th April 1994 to Mr Francisco Vio Grossi, President and Mrs Anna Maria Quiroz, ICAE, from Jorge Osorio Vargas, General Secretary of the Latin American Council for Adult Education.

    The memo reads in part,

    We are worried that the execessive dilation of our controversies through a mountain of faxes and mails where nobody is dedicated to systematize them....

71. See, The International Council for Adult Education: Challenges, Opportunties and Prospects for the Future: Proposals from the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) June, 1994.

    The proposals were prepared by Paul Wangoola, Secretary General of AALAE.

72. Letter to Mr. Alaoy and Mr. Ekundayo J.D. Thompson by Khamati, Minishi and Company Advocates, dated 4th July 1996 referenced CL 4440.

73. See, Personnel Policies of AALAE.

74. AALAE, The International Council for Adult Education: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects for the Future, op. cit.

12

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS?

Organisational Atrophy

Organisational development has featured prominently in development programmes and projects of NGOs. Capacity building and development have been the foci of workshops and seminars in a number of organisations throughout the continent. It is assumed, and rightly so, that without the development of human resources social development programmes will not yield the desired results. Human resources development programmes have therefore aimed at building capacities and capabilities in terms of knowledge and skills development and attitudinal change.

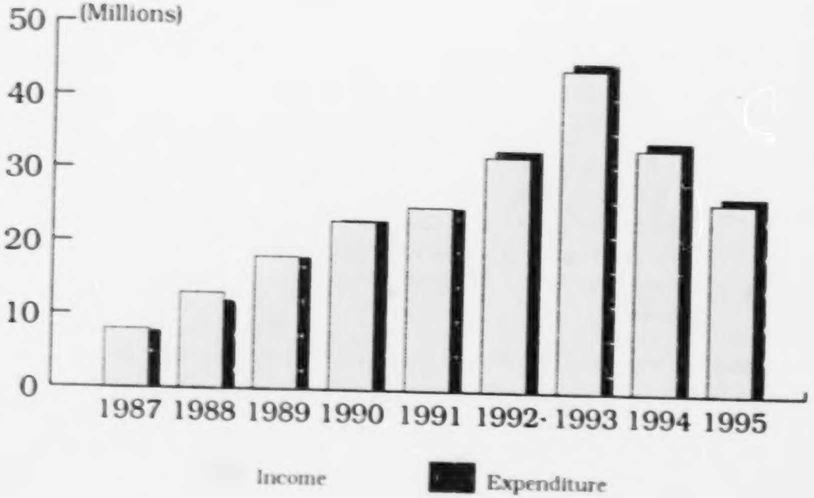
For NGO personnel who have not been socialised in the "NGO Culture" the task of retraining has been daunting. Habit is second nature, so the saying goes. It is these "outsiders" who have, in general, wreaked havoc in development NGOs, and have given a bad name to African NGOs. Official statements and press reports have tended to generalise NGO misdemeanour. But it should be stated that there are several exemplary NGOs whose management styles are sources of strength for those who are weary as a result of the behaviour of wayward NGOs.

The case of AALAE has been a peculiar case of organisational atrophy - a process of destruction and death. How can one explain the formation of another NGO by the secretary general of AALAE whilst he is still being paid to manage the affairs of AALAE? How can one explain the practice of ignoring comments by the auditors? How can one explain the laxity with which the concerns of the donors, partners and members of AALAE have been handled? How can one explain an annual deficit which, according to reliable sources, reached KSh. 10 million in 1995? How can one explain the silence of the chairman when his house is on fire? How can one explain breaches of the law?

When AALAE was formed as a result of the merger between Afrolit and AAEA there was no shortage of goodwill from donors, partners, members and friends. That goodwill was translated into financial support which reached its highest in 1993. Ironically, it was 1993 which marked the beginning of the end. Today, AALAE is insolvent because the goodwill in 1984 has been squandered. The genesis of the problems was when the constitution lost its relevance and the Executive Council became an unnecessary evil. In the absence of the constitution, the Executive Council, the Secretariat Advisory Committee, the Board of Trustees, staff meetings, internal rules and procedures, and the membership, chaos pervaded to fill the vacuum.

Expenditure exceeded income in the absence of financial prudence and discipline. AALAE started to spend money which it did not have. Donors' and partners' funds provided for specific purposes were spent on other things. Why was there an over expenditure when programmes had not been implemented? Since there were no mechanisms for checks and balances and accountability, the spending spree continued on unauthorised programmes and on other grey activities. The following figures on income and expenditure between 1987 and 1995 show that it was after 1993, when the internal control mechanisms were dismantled, that the trouble started.

Figure 1: Income and Expenditure (1987-1995)



Donor - Donee; Partner - Partner Relationships

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ /DVV) resented being referred to as a donor. They had always insisted that it was not their modus operandi to give money and then sit back and watch passively how it was spent. They demanded participation, at the professional level, in discussing concepts, processes and outcomes. AALAE resisted that demand and took offence when DVV found it necessary to comment on programmatic and financial matters.

In his programme proposals for 1996 the secretary general says,

> *"It is the DVV who have strong and clear views and attitudes on AALAE, its role, leadership and management. To my knowledge, the role of AALAE as defined in this proposal meets the specifications of the DVV ... I therefore strongly feel that the DVV is likely to be happy with this proposal - even relieved."*

Secondly.

> *"They are likely to be pleasantly surprised by my decision not to seek, and if offered, not to accept, the position of secretary general of AALAE after my contract expires at the end of 1996."*

This last ditch attempt to get money from DVV was in sharp contrast to a position which the secretary general had always taken as was expressed in a paper which he presented at the 10th meeting of the Executive Council of AALAE in Bauchi, Nigeria in May 1992 in which he says,

> *"The DVV policy and programme in Africa is clear and well documented. For the last 15 years or so DVV has been on a programme to impose its hegemony on the African Continent, at the level of adult education. The DVV has waged battles with AALAE, and its objective cannot be achieved while the AALAE voice remains the voice of African adult educators."*

It was the widely held view that African adult educators and for that matter the AALAE membership had no problems with the DVV whatsoever. Many adult educators were cooperating with the DVV at the national level in their countries. Even members of the Executive Council, including the chairman of AALAE, were implementing programmes under Agreements of Cooperation with the DVV. What was the problem at the regional level?

Why did the secretary general tailor-make a programme for DVV? We should be always consistent and be prepared to die for what we believe - blowing hot and cold will not do.

Personal whims and caprices in AALAE were falsely generalised into organisational idiosyncracies. If the professional advice of DVV and others had been heeded AALAE could, perhaps, have been saved today's catastrophe. DVV gave money and was justified in calling attention to the misuse of the funds it provided for literacy and adult education programmes. The secretary general is an employee of AALAE and must be guided by principles and policies which are collectively determined by the membership and the elected organs, not by his own whims.

Governance

If measures had been taken to enforce good governance at the donor level there would have been no need to spend scarce resources on an investigative audit now. When the Executive Council overstayed after 1993 and the General Assembly was not held, funds should have been suspended pending an explanation and an undertaking that the Association would soon return to legality. But the funds kept coming and illegalities were legalised. Irresponsibility became an organisational character. It has been said that principles are indivisible, they are either kept in whole or sacrified wholly - no half measures. Organisations which have broken the law must be called to account.

The AALAE programme files are replete with concerns by the donors and partners especially their concern in respect of disregard for the terms of the Programme Agreements. Complaints and concerns were generally ignored.

Management Systems

Organisational management is about systems that work; it is about structures that are efficient and effective; it is about processes that are empowering. In his examination of the nature of management Piers Campbell[75] asks "Does Management have any relevance for NGOs?" He explains that,

> *"NGOs' suspicions towards management are based on a number of misconceptions about the nature of management, which themselves stem from the mistaken idea that management is alien to NGOs."*

One NGO which is not only suspicious of, but hostile to, management and management systems is AALAE.

Reference & Endnotes/Chap 12

[75] Campbell, P. "The Management of NGOs An Overview" Paper presented at the South-East Asian seminar Op.cit.

EPILOGUE

The AALAE Crisis has provided challenges and opportunities for organisational introspection. Whilst basking in self-glorification, AALAE's secretary general had always talked about the good work that AALAE was doing, about its high profile and the credibility it enjoyed. But at what cost? The crisis of AALAE is a high profile crisis which has attracted international attention. The manner in which it has been handled and the nature of the crisis itself should be the subject for discussion and analysis in management training seminars and workshops. There are lots of lessons to be learned.

This book would not have been possible without the crisis although it had been the author's cherished dream to write his memoirs on the subject of NGO management given his eternal interest in the subject and yearning for good management. Perhaps it was a blessing that he found himself in a chaotic situation and unsuccessfully tried to work management miracles. That was his predicament!

LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure 1

Findings of a Survey of Members' Opinions on Re-organisation of AALAE

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Annexure 4

Case Study in Programme Mismanagement

Annexure 5

List of Executive Council Members

NOTE:

In addition to the extensive documentation from a number of sources, the author's observation between 1991 and 1996, a survey of the opinions of AALAE members was conducted in November 1995 when it appeared that the AALAE Secretariat had reached a dead end. In order to enrich the process and for the purpose of triangulation a programme case study was documented.

There is a lot of secrecy in what NGOs are doing. We need transparency in NGOs

Tabitha Seii

ANNEXURE 1

Findings of a Survey of Members' Opinions on Re-organisation of AALAE

A survey of the opinions of members and partners on reorganization of AALAE was carried out by the author between November and December 1995. A questionnaire (Annexure 2), was designed to elicit the views and opinions of four categories of respondents viz:

1. Individual members of AALAE
2. Adult Educators
3. Founder members of AALAE
4. Members of staff of Partner/Donor Organizations

All of the above can be described as stake holders, that is, they have an interest in AALAE.

Category one is a constitutional membership category. According to Article 6, of the AALAE Constitution membership of the Association, includes:

> *Individual membership - which shall be open to any individual wanting to apply for such membership.*

Individuals were targeted for the survey to enable views and opinions to be expressed by individuals, and not as members of their respective organizations. They were not expected to express 'official' views because, it was assumed, that individuals would have more freedom to express personal views.

The second category "Adult Educators" consisted of adult education professionals, for example, those who have qualifications in adult education (Diploma or Degree) or earn their living by working in adult education.

Category three consisted of respondents who were present at the founding conferences of the African Adult Education Association (AAEA), and the Afrolit Society in the 1960s. AAEA and Afrolit Society were the predecessors of AALAE. Additionally those who were present at the time of the merger conference in Lome, Togo in 1982 were also included. These were regarded as "founder members" by virtue of their participation at the founding conference although the Constitution of AALAE makes no provision for the founder member category. The majority of these members are, however, individual members of AALAE or members of the member associations of AALAE.

The fourth category consisted of individual staff members of donor or partner organizations, for example, those organizations which provided the financial resources for AALAE's programmes or with whom AALAE cooperated in programme initiation and implementation.

In all, the opinions, that is, beliefs based on personal judgements, of eight individuals out of forty-five; eight adult educators out of fourteen, six members of partner organizations out of twelve responded, and five out of five founder members, responded.

Following is an analysis of respondents by sample frame and geographical representation.

	INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS	ADULT EDUCATORS	FOUNDER MEMBERS	REPS OF PARTNER ORG.
No. of Countries repres	4	6	3	6
No. in Sample	45	14	5	12
No. of respon.	8	8	5	6
Percentage	18%	57%	100%	50%

In all 27 out of 76 individuals (36%) responded.

The opinions of the respondents in general were in favour of decentralization and increased participation of the membership. A decentralized sub-regional administration with sub-regional offices was preferred. This organizational structure was suggested because it would enable the membership to actively participate and determine how AALAE should respond to their needs using resources which are available locally. It was a majority view that the Nairobi secretariat "is too far away" thus making the cost of administration too expensive. It was felt that the Nairobi secretariat in general and the secretary general in particular had become too powerful and consequently were out of touch with the membership. More money was going into administration rather than on programmes. The suggestion that the sub-regional offices should be hosted by the members of AALAE seemed a popular opinion.

On core functions/roles of AALAE the currency of opinion was that AALAE should be a network of the members and that, the headquarters should be a coordinating body. This, it was suggested, would give the members space to do their own programmes as determined by their needs.

On membership it was suggested that the individual membership category should be dropped and that individuals must be members of their respective national or institutional member organisations. Individual membership should be limited to honorary members who should be key people honoured for their work in adult education.

On "Governance" a watchdog committee such as an "Ombudsman" (Council of Elders) or a committee on good governance was suggested as a mechanism to check on mismanagement, abuse of office and receive complaints. The currency of opinion was that the affairs of AALAE have been badly mismanaged as was demostrated by the absence of meetings by the General Assembly, the Executive Council, the Secretariat Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees - " the entire membership has become irrelevant". "AALAE is an illegal organisation".

ANNEXURE 2

Survey Instrument

To:

- Individual Members of AALAE
- Adult Educators
- Founder Members of AALAE
- Members of Staff of Partner/Donor Organisations

From: Ekundayo J.D. Thompson
P.O. Box 38786
NAIROBI

Date: 10th November, 1995

Subject: Reorganization of AALAE: Survey of Members' and Partners' Opinions

Prior to, and following on the Second General Assembly of AALAE which ended in the Islands of Mauritius five years ago today (10th November, 1990), a number of proposals and suggestions in respect of how AALAE should be reorganized have been made. These proposals came in the wake of the global economic and political changes largely occasioned by the political changes in Eastern Europe, and their impact on development thought and practice. Among the proposals are those articulated by the secretary general,[1] and other members of the AALAE secretariat staff, comments by partners, DVV in particular, recommendations by members of AALAE which are contained in the Rugumayo Evaluation Report, and suggestions from personal communication with adult educators and development workers.

The postponement of the Third General Assembly (now rescheduled for 21 - 25 October 1996), dictated mainly by the current financial crisis which AALAE faces, has provided an opportunity for revisiting the issue of reorganization concretely and in a more focused way.

In response to the question "What to Reorganize", I propose that "Everything is on the reorganization agenda - membership, structure, programmes, methods, financing, modes of relationship, methods of work etc".[2]

The purpose of this memorandum is to elicit your opinions on the need and modalities for reorganization. As an individual member of AALAE, a member of AALAE's partner organisation, a committed African adult educator, and someone with commitment to the regional pan-African body and its predecessors, I need your candid opinion on "The AALAE You Want" The opinion which you express and suggestions made will inform the reorganization process that will culminate in the Third General Assembly.

Those who respond by February 10, 1996, will receive one copy of my publications or unpublished papers free of charge in appreciation of your time and effort. I thank you in anticipation.

Kindly send your completed questionnaire to Ekundayo J.D. Thompson, P.O. Box 38786, Nairobi, Kenya, and indicate (with a tick) from the list attached your choice of publication or paper. Additionally you will receive a copy of the Survey Report which might stand you in good stead to contribute to the process of reorganization in an informed manner.

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1 Vide, Secretary-General's Writings and Proposals on "Decentralization" and "Reorganization of AALAE"

2 "Repositioning AALAE as a True Place of Encounter for the membership: A Proposal for Organizational Renewal" by Ekundayo J.D. Thompson.

SURVEY OF MEMBERS' AND PARTNERS'

Opinions on Re-organisation of AALAE

by

Ekundayo J.D. Thompson
Founder Member of AALAE

1.0 *Need for Change*

The political, economic and social contexts in which AALAE was founded in 1984, and in which it operated for over ten years (1984 - 1994) have changed. Consequently, AALAE as a membership service organisation is expected to change. Do you agree?

Yes [ ] No [ ] (Tick one)

1.2 *Nature of Change*

If your answer to 1.0 above is 'yes', what should be the nature of the change?

(Tick as many as you wish)

Constitutional
Organisational and Structural
Administrative Programmatic
Modes of Resourcing
Other (Please specify)

1.2.1 *Constitutional Change*

Which kind of constitutional change would you suggest? (Please tick one).

Review of the entire Constitution
Review of parts of the Constitution (Specify parts)
Undertake Constitutional amendement (Specify parts)
Re-write the Constitution.

1.2.1.1 How should constitutional change be effected?

- By a committee of the Executive Council for ratification by the General Assembly.
- By a special committee constituted for the purpose.
- Proposal for constitutional change should be made by the members.
- By the General Assembly.
- Other (Please specify).

1.2.1.2 When should the AALAE Constitution be changed?

(Please tick one)

At the Third General Assembly

At the Fourth General Assembly

At an extra-ordinary General Assembly convened specifically for the purpose of discussing how AALAE should be re-organised.

1.2.2 *Structural Change*

How should AALAE be structured?

Option 1:	General Assembly (Supreme members' body convened once in 4 years) Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) Board of Trustees (BOT) Secretariat (Specify roles of the secretariat) Complaints/Disciplinary Committee
Option 2:	General Assembly (Convened once in five years) Sub-regional Assemblies (East, West, Central, South) Regional Board (elected by sub-regions) Sub-committees on Finance and Administration Board of Trustees Secretariat Commission on Good Governance (COG)
Option 3:	Regional Assembly (Convened once in five years)

Sub-regional Committees on Finance and Administration

Sub-regional Programme Offices (West Africa, East and Central Africa, South Africa, to be hosted by members)

Option 4: Sub-Regional Assemblies

Regional Board

Sub-Regional Programme Offices (West Africa, East and Central Africa, South Africa, to be hosted by members)

Regional Commission on Good Governance

Other (suggest your preferred structure)

How should AALAE be administered? (Tick one)

Centralised Administration

Decentralised Administration

Sub-regional Administration

If 'Centralized Administration', which would you prefer?

Headquarters with Chief Executive

Headquarters with Programme Manager

If 'Decentralized Administration', which would you prefer?

Sub-regional coordinating offices headed by programme coordinators (Specify number of offices)

Field offices with field personnel

If 'Sub-Regional Administration', which would you prefer?

Four sub-regional offices hosted by AALAE members in West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, South Africa)

Three sub-regional offices hosted by AALAE members for East & Central Africa, West Africa, South Africa.

1.2.3 *Programmatic Change*

Where should the programmes of AALAE come from? (Please tick one)

From the needs of all the members

From the needs of the sub-regions

From the needs of the members and interests of the partners/donors

From the specific needs of the members, interests of the donors/partners, and state development needs and priorities.

1.2.4 Rights, Duties, Obligations and Responsibilities of Members

What should be the rights, duties, obligations and responsibilities of the members of AALAE?

To vote and be voted for

To participate in managing the affairs of the Association

To pay subscriptions

To represent the Association

To receive information and other services

To promote adult education and literacy

To volunteer time and service in the interest of the Association

To respect the Constitution

To assume leadership when appropriate

To call attention to cases of bad governance

To speak out in the interest of the Association

To surrender personal interests and desires to the interests and desires of the Association

To be a member of the national association

Others (Please specify)

1.4 Core Roles/Functions of AALAE

What should the core roles/functions of AALAE be?

Networking

AALAE should:

Maintain a network of members and partners

Develop a network of members and partner

Communication

Communicate with members and partners

Maintain data bases

Do Publications

Do Advocacy

Research and Training

Promote literacy and adult education through research

Undertake training

Programming

Develop programmes and implement them

Evaluation

Undertake evaluation

Partnership

Develop and promote partnership

Organisation

Organise General Assembly, Conferences and Seminars

Resource Mobilisation

Fundraising

Build a pool of professional adult educators and development 'experts'

Other (Please specify)

1.5 Membership

Who should be the members of AALAE? (Tick more than one)

Individuals working in literacy and adult education

Individuls working in community development

Adult Education Professionals

National Adult Education Associations (Associations with a national programme coverage)

Institutes, Departments and Centres of adult education

Other (Please specify)

1.5.1 What should be the category of membership?

As provided for in the Constitution, Article V (p.2)

Other (Please specify)

Participation

(Active involvement in the affairs of AALAE)

Please rate your participation in the affairs of AALAE. (Tick one)

Very high [ ] High [ ]
Low [ ] Very low [ ]
Not involved [ ] (please explain why)

1.6 *Observance of the Provisions of the AALAE Constitution*

Article VI

(1) Individual members who, and institutional members which, are members of the Association shall be expected to be members of their national associations where the latter exist, or shall work to create a national association where none exists. (p.3)

(2) Are you a member of your national association?

If 'No' why?____

____

____

What have you done to create a national association if one does not exist?

____

____

(3) All members of the association, with the exception of occasional membership and those in the life and honorary membership categories, shall pay annual subscription to the association as shall determined by the General Assembly from time to time.

When last did you pay your annual subscription?

Please provide evidence of payment/receipt No. ______ Date ______

Article XII

27. "All minutes of the General Assembly shall be sent to all voting members"

Did you receive the minutes of the Second General Assembly?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Article XVI

37. "A copy of the Auditor's report on the accounts and statements together with such accounts shall be furnished to all members annually after they have been received by the Executive Council".

Have you received the Auditor's report on the AALAE accounts?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If 'Yes', when did you receive the report?

If 'No', what did you do when you did not receive the report?

Article XVIII

43. The books of account and all documents relating thereto and a register of all members of the association shall be available for inspection at the Headquarters of the Association on giving no less than seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary General.

Have you ever exercised your right under this provision of the AALAE Constitution?

If 'Yes', when? ____________________

If 'No', why? ____________________

1.7 Many AALAE members have expressed the need for a "watchdog" body to ensure that the affairs of AALAE are conducted at the highest level of efficiency, accountability, transparency, probity and morality and in accordance with the NGO Code of Conduct; the body which is envisaged could be called "AALAE Watch". It could be made up of interested/concerned individuals, members of AALAE and adult educators.

Don you think such a body is necessary?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If ' Yes' , why ____________________

____

____

What should be its Terms of Reference? ____________________

____

____

ANNEXURE 3

The AALAE Crisis: A Chronological Account

MAY 1993

The Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) met at the Sagret Hotel in Nairobi. The meeting was attended by all the members of SAC except one who was resident in Rwanda.

The meeting received a report on the secretary general's mission to North America, Europe and Chile. He reported that:

> *Many NGOs there [Chile] are closing for lack of financial support from the North. Donors are controlling NGOs more and more through funding and through programme. Power - what is considered power today-is only a mirage of power. For us to be strong we need to be rooted in the membership. AALAE's activities should be supported by the members. Our strength will depend on whether we can move with the membership. We should take the bull by the horns and be proactive; we should, like our donors, do more on less - cut down on staff, money etc. We now have to take the issue of rooting our organisation move seriously. In this regard we should consider opening field offices. Our structure will be sub-regional, with an Executive Council and a small secretariat to handle global and inter-regional matters. [.......]. There is no need to protect anyone's job. (SAC Minutes)*

JULY 15TH

"The secretary general requested an emergency meeting of SAC to consider and advise on the serious financial situation which had abruptly emerged in the Association".

"SAC agreed to recommend to the chairman of AALAE, Dr. A Sets'abi as follows":

The services of five members of staff be terminated.

SEPTEMBER 16TH - 17TH

Meeting of the AALAE Executive Council

"Council noted with concern that members were not subscribing. This was partly because the secretariat does not send demand notes for membership fees...."

"Council noted the termination of the services of [....] as of August 31, 1993 and the termination of [....] consultancy. Council also endorsed the secretary general's recommendation on the termination of [......] services with effect from October 31, 1993.

"Council accepts that the remaining members of staff should be offered contracts up to 31st December, 1993 when the contracts will be reviewed" (Minutes of the 11th meeting of the AALAE Executive Council).

AALAE 1994 *Evaluation*

JULY

Rumours of an imminent financial crisis

AUGUST 29TH

Senior management meeting told that a very serious financial crisis existed. Threats with regard to sacking of staff and closure of the secretariat issued. Finance and administration officer offered to leave the services of AALAE.

SEPTEMBER

3rd Meeting on *Mpambo*, to develop proposal.

10th Meeting on *Mpambo*, to develop proposal.

11th Meeting on *Mpambo*, to develop proposal.

1995

JULY/AUGUST

Threats of closure of the secretariat.

OCTOBER

Chairman of AALAE consultative meeting

First indication that AALAE is insolvent.

Third General Assembly postponed.

9th Chairman of AALAE failed to meet members of staff.

10th Secretary general advised and agrees to proceed on sabbatical leave, and to allow for reorganisation of AALAE.

13th Secretary general confirms decision to proceed on sabbatical leave and allow for the reorganisation of AALAE.

Letter to AALAE treasurer requesting her to use her good offices to solve the AALAE crisis.

18th Secretary general agrees to step down during the Third General Assembly of AALAE in October 1996.

20th Secretary general proceeds on mission to Sudan

23rd Consultative meeting with Matthew Bosunga, AALAE Executive Council member and vice chair of ICAE.

Request for an independent investigative audit of the administrative and financial affairs of AALAE.

25th Kenya Adult Education Association requests US $ 4,805 being balance of TAP funds due to the Association.

30th Dr. Juma Nyirenda acknowledges update on the AALAE Crisis and offers advice on ways of solving it.

Letter to chairman and members of the Secretariat Advisory Committee in respect of Employment Agreement.

31th Meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC)

Secretary general reports on proposal for a tripartite business initiative involving IARA, *Mpambo* and AALAE.

First indication that *Mpambo* poses a serious threat to AALAE.

NOVEMBER

Secretary general departs for Kampala.

12th Statement in support of independent investigative audit of the administrative and financial affairs of AALAE issued.

23rd Kenya Adult Education Association demands US $ 4,805 being balance of TAP funds due to the Association.

24th Letter to the chairman and members of the Secretariat Advisory Committee on "The AALAE Crisis".

"Personal Communication on "The AALAE Crisis" sent to the members and friends of AALAE.

DECEMBER

15th SAC meeting called off without explanation.

1996

JANUARY

18th Secretary general's request to J.D. Thompson and Alaoy to provide information on the list of people who have received information on the AALAE Crisis.

Secretary general proceeds to Canada for the Annual General Meeting of Partnership Africa Canada (25 - 26 January).

FEBRUARY

8th Staff informed that the AALAE Crisis is deepening, and that "No salaries will be paid at the end of the month".

9th Secretary general departs for India to consult on how to re-organise AALAE.

J.D. Thompson's services irregularly terminated by secretary general.

19th Secretary general returns from India and finds J.D. Thompson in the secretariat.

Secretary general threatens J.D. Thompson with forcible eviction if he did not leave the secretariat.

20th J.D. Thompson hands over under protest and leaves the secretariat.

J.D. Thompson's work permit cancelled.

28th Complaint against secretary general lodged with the National Council of NGOs in accordance with the Code of Conduct for NGOs.

MARCH

8th Open letter to the Chairman of AALAE on the "AALAE Crisis."

14th J.D. Thompson receives death threats, and warned to leave Kenya.

J.D. Thompson records statement at the Kilimani Police in connection with death threats.

AALAE donors and partners and their diplomatic representatives in Kenya are informed about the AALAE Crisis.

APRIL

3rd Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) acknowledges J.D. Thompson's communication on the AALAE Crisis.

12th "Facts and Figures" on the AALAE Crisis presented to the National Council of NGOs.

14th Secretary general request David Nyende and Mr. John Kananda "for a professional opinion on the management and financial situation at AALAE".

18th NORAD acknowledges J.D. Thompson's communication on the AALAE Crisis.

27th John Kananda calls for closure of the AALAE secretariat because "The organisation is technically insolvent".

29th The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education (IIZ/DVV) acknowledges J.D. Thompson's communication on the AALAE Crisis.

MAY

4th David Nyende issues Interim Report on the situation at AALAE.

5th NGO Council by letter of 10.05.96 referenced REG/14/466/cI/95 requests J.D. Thompson to complete INTERIM COMPLAINT Form.

7th The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association IIZ/DVV) requests Paul Wangoola to, among other things, invalidate "the allegations brought up by Mr. J.D. Thompson..."

16th Paul Wangoola by letter referenced 701.2.3 invites a number of people including Anthony Sets'abi and David Nyende to be Vice Chair and Treasurer of *Mpambo* Board of Directors respectively.

Mary B.A. Opiyo, Treasurer of AALAE resigns.

21st Meeting of the Secretariat Advisory Committee.

29th The Executive Director of CIVICUS acknowledges J.D. Thompson's communication on the AALAE Crisis and provides information on the status of the CIVICUS programme in Africa.

Paul Wangoola issues the following statements:

"On the Programme and Financial situation at the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education".

"On the Allegations by Messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE"

"A statement on Urgent Issues on the Affairs of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education".

JUNE

3rd Paul Wangoola writes to the members of the Executive Council and the members of AALAE on "Allegations by Messrs Alaoy and J.D. Thompson on the Affairs of AALAE".

4th The International Council for Adult Education acknowledges J.D. Thomspon's communication on the AALAE Crisis.

17th Communication by the Executive Director of ICAE on the AALAE Crisis.

28th Instant termination of Alaoy's appointment by secretary general.

Robinson Nyacharo and Ben Abuya sent on unpaid leave by secretary general.

JULY

2nd Paul Wangoola writes to the NGO Council with regard to the complaint lodged by J.D. Thompson.

4th Action on "Libellous publication against AALAE and its officers" proposed by Khamati Minishi and Company Advocates and Commissioners for Oaths on behalf of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education/Paul Wangoola.

11th The Chairman of the Secretariat Advisory Committee (SAC) resigns.

With the resignation of the Chairman, John Kananda is the only SAC member resident in Nairobi.

Donors and Partners commission Investigative Audit of AALAE.

19th J.D. Thompson submits evidence of administrative and financial irregularities to NGO Council entitled "The Truth the Whole Truth Nothing But the Truth"

24th Attempt on the life of J.D. Thompson

J.D. Thompson makes report to the Police and informs all concerned about the threat to his life.

30th J.D. Thompson records statements at Kilimani Police .

AUGUST

7th Press article on the AALAE Crisis (*Daily Nation of Kenya*)

12th **Coopers and Lybrand** commences Investigative Audit of AALAE.

SEPTEMBER

AALAE Secretariat assets are advertised for auction.

OCTOBER

Coopers and Lybrand issues draft and final report on investigative audit of AALAE. AALAE Secretariat is sealed off by the landlords.

JANUARY 1997

AALAE Secretariat finally closes down.

ANNEXURE 4

Case Study in Programme Mismanagement

AALAE/Wrens Nest Community Exchange Programme: A bungled Affair

1.0 Background

In May 1996 the secretary general of AALAE issued "A statement on the Programme and Financial Situation of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education". One of the programme activities he reported on was the South-South Exchange Programme for which resources were mobilised from a number of sources including the British Council.

The Exchange Programme was an AALAE/Wrens Nest Community Centre initiative.

2.0 The Initiative

In 1993 the Black Sensations Youth Steel Band performed at a national conference which was held in Dudley in the UK. The secretary general of AALAE attended the conference and saw the group perform. In his excitement he made a proposal to have the group perform in Kenya and Uganda.

The group, which comprised of young musicians from Dudley, aged 13 - 18 years, had come together "to learn about and perform steel band music". They were led by a musician of considerable experience who is also the father of one of the members of the group.

The group is part of the Dudley Caribbean Friends Association (DCFA), which is a registered charity that organises a variety of activities for the Dudley community. The Local Authority which had supported DCFA in the past had offered a range of assistance towards the realisation of the objectives of the Exchange Programme.

Two members of staff were involved with fundraising and organisational matters. One of them, the Deputy Head of the Borough's music service has had considerable experience arranging tours by musicians abroad. The Local Authority and DCFA worked "to ensure that not only the tour goes ahead, but it does so safely and in a way that the young people will return with a positive experience".

It was agreed that once the group arrived in Nairobi the cost of the tour would be met by AALAE. The UK fund raising was to meet "the cost of getting the group and their instruments, to and from Kenya and Uganda. In all twelve people were expected to undertake the tour; nine members of the band and three adults.

On his return to Nairobi the secretary general announced that he had invited the group. A project coordinator was contracted to organise the visit in Kenya and Uganda.

3.0 Objective of the Exchange

To provide a forum for the black British youngsters and their Kenyan and Ugandan counterparts, and any others whose participation may be made possible, to share experiences and lessons towards a deeper understanding of their cultural backgrounds and therefore a better contribution towards their future.

4.0 Time-Frame and Duration

August to September 1995 (Four weeks)

5.0 Programme

Musical performances, workshops, discussions and sightseeing.

6.0 Accomodation

Homestays, youth hostels and hotels

7.0 Transport

A mixture of hired vehicle and public transport vehicles.

8.0 Organisation

In the UK by DCFA. In Africa by AALAE, Regional Project Coordinator and national coordinators in Kenya and Uganda.

Finance

Fundraising for the core expenses would be by AALAE and DCFA. The various regional coordination units were also expected to fundraise.

9.0 The Problem

The arrangements for the Exchange Programme was poorly handled by AALAE inspite of the tremendous efforts made by the Coordinator. The financial crisis of AALAE exacerbated the organisational and logistical problems to the extent that a postponement of the tour became necessary and was suggested by AALAE. In a letter to Jim Austin dated 12th June 1995 the secretary general indicated that AALAE was having financial problems. He said:

> *"As we have severally indicated to you, AALAE is still undergoing a difficult financial situation and this is seriously affecting the projections we had made for this project".*

The signals that were being received in the UK were that the tour would not go on because of AALAE's financial problems. The UK organisers therefore wanted reassurances that AALAE would honour their commitments.

In a letter to Paul Wangoola dated 22nd June, 1995 Jim Austin said,

> *I have had a phone call from the British Council in London who are concerned about a message from their Nairobi office... In essence they appear to be saying to London that they don't think the tour will go forward at your end. It sounds as though they may need some reassurance fairly quickly otherwise they may withdraw altogether from the project.*

Given all that had been done in the UK to plan the tour it was a big disappointment when it was suggested that the tour be postponed. Paul Wangoola's letter to Jim Austin was a bombshell.

The letter says in part,

> *We therefore find ourselves in a position where, despite our determination to see the rest of the exchange programme through, we actually do not have that financial capacity, at this moment, to facilitate the Kenyan part of the programme effectively. To cut a long story short, this is what we suggest:*
>
> - *postpone to a later date*
> - *come one week later i.e. shorten the trip*
> - *come on schedule with an additional US $ 5000 to cover additional board and transport.*

As expected the UK organisers were not only disappointed but worried. Paul Wangoola's response to their disappointment and worry was contained in another letter to Jim Austin. He says:

> *In this part of the world we live in uncertainty and planning is a projection like a weather forecast. In certain circumstances we manage by being optimistic.*

Jim Austin's shock and disappointment were contained in a letter to Paul Wangoola dated 9th August. It reads:

> *I really cannot express my shock and disappointment on receipt of your fax. After asking you some 6 months ago to let me know if the tour was*

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> ***being jeopardised, you have not said anything to indicate that your commitment would not be fulfilled.***

Jim Austin informed Mr. Wangoola that they did not have additional money and that postponement would mean that the tour would not take place at all. He said that the people involved in funding would withdraw their money because it was unlikely that they would commit themselves to support a scheme that was postponed after 18 months of planning and preparation. He gave Paul Wangoola an alternative.

> *I think that you have to make a clear decision to either fulfil your original commitment by one means or another or cancel the tour. Those involved that I have spoken to since reading your fax consider that it is totally unfair on your part to put additional burden/pressures on our local organisation to sort out problems that are none of our making and they feel very upset at being treated in this way.*

10.0 The Tour

The tour went on with great difficulty - psychological, organisational, logistical and financial. From Jim Austin's letter to me it appeared that they were very unhappy at the way the tour was handled. He explains:

> *At the heart of the problem in our dealing with Paul and AALAE is that we were led to believe that although there may have been some financial problems for the organisation the tour itself would be ok. There were plenty of opportunities at an earlier stage for Paul to say that the tour might be in jeopardy. I quite deliberately wrote at an earlier stage to say that I would rather see a change at an earlier stage than leave things until the last minute thereby causing disappointment for the young people. This opportunity was not picked up and so we carried on with our plans only to have the last minute problems that occured. It was this I think that made me particularly angry. Its one thing to mess another organisation about but when the result of the action causes anxiety and uncertainty for young people travelling to a country for the first time which is what happened during the few days leading up to the scheduled departure of the group - was, I think, indefensible.*
>
> *Not only did we have to make last minutes changes in the arrangements of flights causing our group to have to pay extra money, but then having got to Nairobi there were attempts to get the group to hand over money to AALAE supposedly to cover costs that AALAE claimed to have incurred. As far as I am concerned the senior officers at AALAE treated these young people despicably. The idea of the tour was as much as anything was for the young people to have a sense of their cultural roots.*

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> *The attitude with which they were met was that, the fact that they came from Britain automatically meant they were rich and could therefore afford to be conned out of as much money as possible.*
>
> *I wish you well with your endeavours and whilst the result of this experience for me is that I will never deal with Paul and James again. I know that they are the exception rather than the rule.*

The tour was bungled because it was flawed *ab initio*. First, the secretary general saw the group perform and invited them to Africa oblivious of the financial implications. Second, that programme was not part of AALAE's programmes for which funds had been provided. Even those programmes for which donor funds had been provided were in jeopardy due to "lack of money". Third, AALAE did not have disposable income for extra expenditure because it was in a financial crisis which had resulted in the departure of members of staff. The financial crisis had "suddenly emerged" in 1993. Fourth, the organisation of the programme did not allow for the participation of the entire staff, just like the decision to invite the group. The secretary general made the decision in the UK and on his return decided on who to participate in implementing the programme.

The decision to invite the group was an example of decision-making in AALAE, at the spur of the moment. There was nothing suprising at the way things went; that's how things happened in AALAE. If the UK organisers had known AALAE, the organisational culture and leadership style, they should never have thought of entertaining such a risky proposition and of venturing into such an adventure. But they had been warned! During the secretary general's speech at the conference in which he saw the group perform, he said to his audience,

> *You live under the threat of time; for "time waits for no man or woman", and what is more, "time is money"! But as many of you come to know, often with amusement, for us Africans time is a resource, an elastic resource to be managed by men, women and children. We are therefore masters of time and not slaves of time.*
>
> *("On the African World Outlook", in Ngoma Ya Mano November 1993 p.6)*

So when Paul Wangoola suggested postponement of the tour irrespective of the financial and psychological devastation to the organisers and the participants he was doing so as master and not slave of time. Time was not of the essence.

11.0 What are the Issues?

The issues are ethical, cultural, ideological and management.

12.0 What is the Lesson?

Next time be careful who you chose to dance with! Walk circumspectly if you suspect that there is a hidden agenda!

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Annexure 5

LIST OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

1990 - 1993 (Elected)
1993 - 1996 (By Default)

Chairman:	Anthony Sets' abi	Lesotho
Past Chairmen:	Loombe I. Bosunga	Zaire
	James Ogunlande	Nigeria
Secretary General:	Paul Wangoola	Uganda
Treasurer:	Mary B.A. Opiyo	Kenya
Chairman: (Board of Trustees)	David Kirui	Kenya
Vice-Chairmen: (Southern Africa)	Juma Nyirenda	Zambia
Eastern Africa	Anthony Okech	Uganda
Francophone Central and the Indian Ocean Islands	Ramsing Hurrynag	Mauritius
Anglophone West Africa	Adama Berthe	Mali
	E.D.A. Turay	Sierra Leone
Lusophone Africa	Carlos Fumo	Mozambique
Members:	Kgomotso Ntsatsi	Botswana
	Bernadette Fumbuka	Tanzania
	Catherine Buyoya	Burundi
	Joyce Mangvwat	Nigeria
	Babacar Diop	Senegal
	Joao Romeu	Angola

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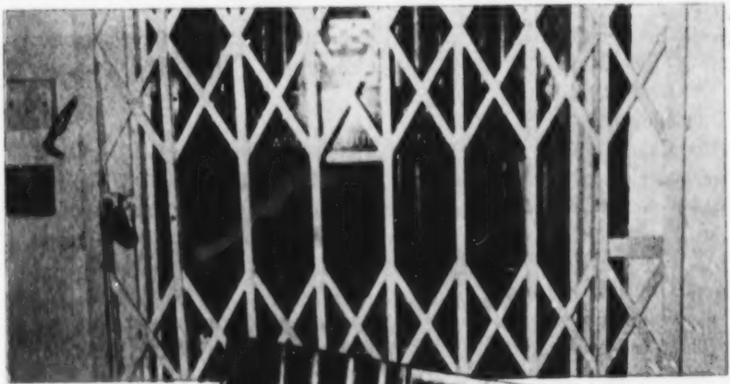

Sealed by the Landlord

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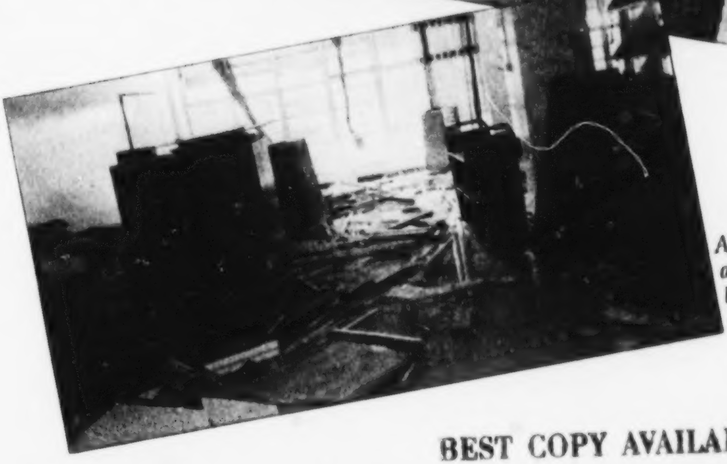
AND ADULT EDUCATION (AALAE)

Before the auctioneers moved in



After the auctioneers broke in January '97

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Ekundayo J.D. Thompson was formerly Principal of Laura Dove Vocational School in Freetown, Sierra Leone, National Secretary of the Peoples' Educational Association of Sierra Leone, and Lecturer at the Institute of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.

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The Prince of AALAE: Mismanagement & Corruption in an African NGO is a graphic account of both political management and organizational mismanagement of a regional NGO, the Africa Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE). It is an account of how personal greed and centralized power led to corporate ruin. The book discusses the myths and realities of African NGOs, diagnoses the causes of organizational dysfunction, analyzes the nature and essence of the AALAE crisis, sums up the lessons drawn from the crisis, and suggests the way forward. This book certainly sets in motion the process of re-thinking NGO management globally.

The debacle is so distressing that I am even reluctant to think that such a monstrous tragedy is possible.

Edward Ulzen, Mamprobi, Ghana

It is a devastating indictment of an NGO which has been turned into a personal businesss. A compulsory reading for all those involved in development work.

Dr. Abimbola Davies-Cole, Sierra Leone

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